AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC THEOLOGY

Imam Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī's *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*

INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, ANNOTATION, AND APPENDICES

BY FARAZ A. KHAN

ZAYTUNA COLLEGE

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In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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Foreword

HAMZA YUSUF HANSON

IN THE EARLY PERIOD of Islam, during the generations following the Prophet's life, Muslims relied upon an ethos of trust in the teaching, and faith was not fortified with discursive reason. The first creeds were simple and easy to grasp, and the reasons within the revelation were deemed sufficient. The Prophet ﷺ himself had warned his followers not to delve too deeply into abstruse questions about fate and destiny, and his counsel instilled in early scholars a hesitancy to tread the waters of theology.

The emergent Muslim community followed an elementary and effective creed drawn directly from the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ and best exemplified in the initial traditionalist (*atharī*) work of Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321 AH/933 CE), which had the assent of the great schools of Islam despite the differences among Muslim theologians. Another important creed of that period that eschewed speculative theology or scholastic sophistication—known as subtle dialectical theology (*daqīq al-kalām*)—was the work of Ibn Abī Zayd (d. 386/996), a great Maliki jurist of Tunisia, who summarized early Muslim belief in the introduction to his *Al-Risālah* (The epistle).

The nascent fideistic creeds of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nuʿmān (d. 150/767), and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) had no prescriptive methodology to address the questions that confronted scholars of the second century, other than to

countenance belief and avoid wading into uncharted theological waters. But those waters had been charted heavily by Christians before them, and to a lesser extent, by the Jews (whose faith was more fideistic than that of Orthodox Christianity and focused on praxis).

As Muslims encountered the Byzantines and the great Peripatetic schools of the Levant and Persia, they had to grapple with questions from sophisticated theologians and philosophers who wanted to know the nature of God. For example, they asked whether God's attributes, such as God's speech, were eternal; if so, given that Jesus was the logos (*kalimah*) according to both the New Testament and the Qur'an, they asked if Jesus was coeternal with the Creator. As Greek thought—especially the works of Aristotle, Plato, and Plotinus translated into Arabic—entered into the Muslim ethos, it posed perplexing philosophical questions for Muslims. These challenges opened up new avenues of interest for intellectually thirsty Muslim thinkers and subsequently led to creedal disputes that arose from the metaphysical debates such challenges evoked.

The dialectic that emerged in the incipient Muslim intellectual tradition had its genesis in two distinct schools of thought: staunch traditionalist schools, which prioritized faith over reason, and the rationalist school of the Muʿtazilah, which privileged reason over a stark literalist reading of revelation.

The Muʿtazilah, an Iraqi school that arose in the eighth century from a dispute between Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 130/748) and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), a Sunni scholar, grew in prominence, and after being adopted by the caliphs, especially al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833), spread from its center in Basra to Baghdad and beyond. However, the attempt to understand revelation through the prism of human reason led to problematic positions, especially regarding free will and the problem of evil. One of the great students of the school, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936), abandoned the rationalists in his response to—according to the most

accepted story—a series of dreams in which the Prophet ﷺ came to him. Initially, he joined Aḥmad's more fideistic school, and later he formulated his own school to defend the Sunni creed, incorporating the most useful tools introduced by the Muʿtazilah.

While the Ashʿarīs consolidated the foundations of their school in Iraq, another great theological school was emerging in Central Asia—that of Imam Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944). A brilliant follower of Abū Ḥanīfah's juristic school, Abū Manṣūr introduced a sophisticated approach to theology that would develop into a formidable scholastic tradition adopted by the majority of Hanafi scholars and their followers.

These three great scholastic theological traditions of Muslim civilization—the Muʿtazilī, Ashʿarī, and Māturīdī—competed for ascendency among the scholastic classes during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Hijrah calendar. The Ashʿarī and Māturīdī creedal schools, which sought a balance between faith and reason (*naql* and *ʿaql*) in the Islamic tradition, emerged victorious over the rationalist school of the Muʿtazilah. That balance, that necessary symbiosis between reason and revelation, crystallized into the normative and moderate Sunni tradition, protecting people from falling away from faith due to an unexamined reliance on reason and from falling into blind dogmatism—or worse, zealous fanaticism—due to a faith that fails to employ reason.

One of the most important intermediate texts of the Māturīdī school, *Al-Bidāyah*, had a profound influence on Muslim scholastics and was widely used and often cited in some of the most important commentaries of both the Māturīdī and Ashʿarī schools. In perhaps the most widely studied commentary on Sunni creed, the polymath and Ashʿarī scholastic theologian Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) quotes extensively from *Al-Bidāyah*. This Ashʿarī exposition of the Māturīdī creed of Imam al-Nasafī (d. 508/1114) indicates the high status and authority *Al-Bidāyah*

held among the two schools that would come to dominate the Sunni Muslim world.

This excellent translation and commentary by Shaykh Faraz Khan—a well-schooled, budding scholastic himself—qualifies as the first major translation of a foundational Māturīdī text into the English language. Such texts remain relevant to the continued theological discourse within Islam and without, given the Māturīdī school's continued relevance, which cannot be overstated. The school's perpetuity remains ensured by its unique characteristics: its soft natural law approach, which counters the hard Muʿtazilī position; its affirmation of the centrality of reason; its emphasis on moral accountability in the absence of revelation; and its subtle awareness of the seemingly intractable problems of causation, free will, and divine determinism that reveal its concern for the most compelling problems of theology. Moreover, the school found a marvelous middle space that enables such theological bugbears and paradoxes to be subdued and resolved through an awareness of *antinomies*, for want of a better word, which allows theologians to distinguish between the various degrees of existence (*marātib al-wujūd*), each degree with its own postulates and principles.

Kalam (Islamic theology), like all the great sciences and teachings of Islam, needs renewal and development, especially in light of the immense strides our species has made in the physical sciences—sciences that Muslim theologians were always engaged in during the great periods of Muslim intellectual flourishing. Our scholars dealt with the most knotty and enigmatic problems of physics, cosmology, and theology, and many of their resolutions and reconciliations are as relevant today as they were a thousand years ago.

A proverb often quoted by Muslim scholastics states, "Stop where they stopped, and then proceed." In other words, we must know what the ancients knew before we can add to or subtract from their profuse and fertile legacy.

Our challenge, then, is a formidable one: to rediscover and renew Islamic theology, to reconcile the divorce between the modern physical sciences and the theological and ethical considerations of the religious sciences, and to restore the balance between reason and revelation. The human condition, after millennia, remains the same, and the questions that confront and challenge us are perennial ones that every generation must ultimately face if an unexamined life is to be avoided: What is this world (ontology)? Where did it come from (cosmology)? How do we know anything (epistemology)? What do we do while we are here (soteriology)? And finally, where are we going (eschatology)?

All the world's religions engage these evergreen questions; yet, for Muslims, the answers to them dwell in the very heart and essence of Islam's revelation as expressed and formalized in its great creeds, waiting only to be discovered anew. You, gentle reader, may be pleasantly surprised to find many of the answers you have been searching for by beginning with this "beginning"—this introduction, or *Al-Bidāyah*.

Introduction

THE CENTRAL PURPOSE of authentic religion is to enlighten people regarding reality, in a profoundly full ontological sense, as well as to guide them on how to live in the world in accordance with that reality—namely, to know, love, and worship the abidingly real (God, the exalted) and to serve His creation with nobility and purpose. In the language of philosophy, religion's point of departure is metaphysics—the science of being and of first principles and the foundation of religion's law and virtue ethics, from which emanate its politics. Unfortunately, the first principles that ground our knowledge of metaphysics have not fared well in recent intellectual history. In many ways, Western post-Enlightenment modernity represents a departure from first principles, while the postmodernity that followed is characterized by their very deconstruction. Rather than first principles, power structures are fundamentally what must be known and understood to discover reality; accordingly, deconstruction of their linguistic and political foundations reveals the subjective biases of what various societies deem real. Thus, ours is an era that generally deems the notion of universal and absolute truth to be an antiquated idea, a mere relic of the medieval past, and replaces it with a multiplicity of plastic words and tractable truths, each relative to a people's experience, culture, history, or worldview. To the chagrin of biology, even gender is not spared from the deconstructionist onslaught. The understanding of truth as correspondence between ideas or propositions and objective reality is replaced with coherence or pragmatic

theories of truth: truth is our integration of beliefs into a coherent system, or simply whatever works for us as members of a society. For thoroughgoing postmodernists, truth is whatever consensus is arrived at by politically influential members of society, whose social deliberations construct reality. And despite the incoherence of such forms of relativism, in that they are truth claims regarding the way the world actually is and therefore need some level of correspondence to make their arguments, many of their proponents consider religion a nuisance at best. But for people genuinely in search of meaning and of guidance, of the ultimate telos of existence and its ground of being, divinely revealed religion remains a beacon of hope, a lighthouse in the vast ocean of philosophical unruliness.

Because modern man often recoils at the notion of absolute truth, due to a perception of resultant intolerance, it must be underscored that the doctrinal exclusion entailed by objective truth does not preclude sociopolitical harmony; both principles are essential for the human family. The diversity of the human spectrum is an opportunity for mutual recognition and benefit, for it is predicated on a shared humanity that demands peaceful coexistence and respect for the other.[1] Truth, however, is but one. Epistemological realism asserts that contrary propositions cannot be simultaneously true, for the human mind does not construct reality but discovers it. Thus, far more than just a code of legal strictures or a set of rituals, authentic religion is an expression of metaphysics; a recognition of reality *as it truly is*; and at bottom, a remembrance of the divine. Through that remembrance, human consciousness is imbued with a sense of the sacred—an illumination that increasingly permeates one's very being and enables the individual to discern truth from falsehood and thereby lead a sincere life of virtue, altruism, empathy, and love. The soul's illumination also provides self-awareness of one's faults and shortcomings, which one must continuously struggle to overcome yet which also serve the purpose of

reminding the enlightened that all good is from God alone, who often uses human error to apprise the faithful of their perennial need for His help. At its core, authentic religion is a recollection of a primordial encounter, the divine covenant before the creation of the world, when all souls were gathered in the presence of their Creator, who asked in His astonishing and ineffable majesty, "Am I not your Lord?" Without hesitation or misgiving, every soul replied, "Indeed."

According to Islamic scripture, all prophets taught that the supreme virtue from which other virtues are derived is to know reality, acquiesce to it, and express it verbally: "There is no deity but God" (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*), coupled with a second act of submission to the prophetic messenger of one's era, the expression of which since the seventh century until the end of time is "Muḥammad ﷺ is God's Messenger" (*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*). This virtue of faith and submission (*al-īmān wa al-islām*) is the key to salvation. Though predicated on a cognitive state (certitude), it is still a moral virtue, given that it entails a genuine movement of the soul: to humbly accept and submit to what one knows to be true. Faith, then, culminates with the simple verbal articulation, whereby the illumination in the heart becomes manifest in the world.

The Islamic conception of faith—submission of the heart to absolute reality, which the individual knows with certitude through sound reasoning of the intellect—differs fundamentally from conceptions of faith as essentially unreasonable or illogical and hence requiring a leap beyond logic. Such a conception is often attributed to the Danish existentialist Søren Kierkegaard (d. 1855), who regarded the absurd as the very object of faith. According to a literal interpretation of Kierkegaard's discourse on religion, faith is principally an irrational experience since religious belief cannot be grounded in reason.[2] In the dialectic of modern European philosophy, Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) ostensibly refuted the three main arguments for the existence of God: the

teleological, cosmological, and ontological proofs in their Western presentations. Theism, divested of any rational grounding in Kierkegaard's cognitive world, was relegated to a new epistemology: just as Abraham ﵇ displayed a profound leap of faith when called to sacrifice his son, so too must the individual leap into affirming God's existence by the very act of faith. One must go beyond the laws of reason if one is to have religion, since reason cannot lead one to God.

Traditional theism would regard such a similitude as a false analogy. In Islam, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son demonstrates the great prophet's virtue of reliance [upon God] (*tawakkul*), which is conceptually distinct from faith (*īmān*), although reliance arises from faith and profoundly reinforces it. The act of reliance, of placing one's trust and optimism in God, certainly involves a leap, sometimes immense, in believing that worldly situations will unfold with merciful outcomes and reveal hidden grace, whether in this life or the next. However difficult life's vicissitudes might be, God remains in control, and the believer relies upon Him for facilitation, gentleness, spiritual openings, and deliverance. God is, after all, the Lord of miracles; the laws of physics are vulnerable to interruption by divine fiat. It was only by God's power that Moses ﵇ parted the Red Sea and that Jesus ﵇ gave sight to the blind, healed the leper, and brought the dead back to life. It was also by this same infinite power that Muḥammad ﷺ ascended through the heavens one night to witness God's greatest signs. But faith in God, the abidingly real, is rooted in reason and in the negation of all that is logically absurd—based on the immutable logical laws of identity, excluded middle, and non-contradiction, the denial of which presupposes them—and is based on distinct metaphysical categories, such as necessity, possibility, and impossibility, as well as eternality or infinitude versus temporality or finitude. Sound metaphysics is the ground in which certain faith is planted and where it flourishes.

Pace Kant, God's existence and oneness can be logically deduced. By necessity, all things finite, temporal, and contingent point to the infinite, atemporal, and non-contingent—the eternal divine entity, who is necessarily existent. A world that is metaphysically possible is not self-sustaining or self-explaining; to avoid an infinite regress of possibilities, its existence is rationally explained only by a giver and sustainer of existence whose own existence is metaphysically necessary and who is thus eternal, who selected the world as it is among limitless possibilities, and who with omnipotent power created it as such. And no other being or entity can share in this description and its implicit declaration of divinity, since any limitation of these necessary attributes would constitute a logical contradiction by rendering our conception of the eternal as *non-eternal* and the atemporal as *temporal*, for only the temporal can be limited. The specifications and multiplicity of the cosmos bespeak the eternality and unicity of its maker.

The laws of physics can be bent or altogether broken; the quantum world has proclaimed this loudly. But the laws of metaphysics are inherently certain and absolute: nothing can simultaneously exist and not exist (when considered from the same vantage), and the atemporal cannot be temporal nor resemble it in the least, nor can the ordination of one be two or three while remaining one. By the act of reliance upon God, as Abraham ﷺ epitomized, the believer may leap past the laws of physics and the expected patterns of worldly events. Through faith—the heart's submission to God on the basis of certitude derived from reason—the believer's existence and purpose are aligned with the laws of metaphysics.

The Emergence of Formal Discursive Theology

Muslim scholastics recognized metaphysics as the beginning of authentic religion and its foundations (or *uṣūl al-dīn*, an Arabic term used in the Islamic intellectual tradition for the discipline of

theology). Other terms include monotheism (*tawḥīd*); the greater jurisprudence (*al-fiqh al-akbar*), in comparison with Islamic law, which was deemed the lesser jurisprudence, given that law stems from theology and is rooted in it; creedal theology (*ʿaqīdah*); and as it is most well-known, discursive theology or kalam (*kalām*). A notable difference in the Abrahamic faiths is that theology in traditional Christian or Jewish discourse encompasses topics that in the Islamic tradition are located outside kalam—in sciences such as the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*); Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*); and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), which comprises both ethics and mysticism. Specifically, kalam deals with tenets of faith pertaining to realities divine, prophetic, and eschatological.

The earliest Muslims, though, did not engage in formal theology or enlist rational demonstration to defend creed. While the Qur'an contains rational arguments[3] for some creedal tenets, the Qur'anic style is not argumentative in a dialectical sense. The chapter "Sincerity" (*Sūrat al-ikhlāṣ*, 112:1–4), for example, presents Islamic creed in a manner that is at once celestial and sublime yet accessible even for the unlearned: "Say: God is one. God is independent. He neither sired, nor was He sired. And no thing compares to Him." All forms of idolatry, physical or mental, are shattered by the divine unicity—the categorical uniqueness and supreme oneness of God that admits of no partnership or composition. God is eternally absolute (*al-Ṣamad*), a name derived from a root word denoting a plenum, lacking any interstices or space, and also denoting orientation and directionality. The Arabs understood from the first denotation that God in His plenitude has no need, and from the second denotation that all besides God is oriented to Him and utterly dependent on His fiat for existence and continuity.

Yet rather than philosophize about monotheism and its implications, Islam's early adherents pursued realization and righteousness; they sought only to serve God and seek His pleasure, and they understood that a slave simply hears and obeys. Indeed,

they saw the power of authentic religion to be experiential and transformative: God's presence is evident through His wonders and signs (*āyāt*), which imbue the world and the lives of humanity. The early Muslims were concerned with correct actions, which they viewed as immortal good deeds (*bāqiyāt ṣāliḥāt*) that would await them on Judgment Day, when humans are held accountable for their actions on earth. They had absorbed the Qur'anic message that this worldly life is merely the soil for planting the seeds of the next life. In addition, their immediate challenges were existential because the nascent Muslim community was constantly aggressed upon; so besides worship and spirituality, their focus was on matters ethical and political. Philosophical exploration of theology and developing a formal theological discourse were not a priority because they were not a necessity.

As the contemporary theologian Tim Winter notes, the universal mercy of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ at one level entails a religious teaching of "great simplicity," whose basic features initially appeared rather uncomplicated, as a reflection of "the simplicity of an Abrahamic and 'primordial' monotheism (*millah Ibrāhīmiyyah ḥanīfiyyah*), marked by an iconoclastic rejection of idolatry, a call to repentance, and an unshakable trust in the justice and mercy of God."[4] Yet over successive generations, as Islamdom continued to expand and grow, Muslims became directly exposed to the theological traditions of other religions. They were introduced to novel philosophical questions and new doctrinal challenges when they encountered an influx of converts from earlier traditions, as well as influences from the systems of thought of late antiquity (such as Hellenism). Numerous Muslim intellectuals adopted these views and modes of reasoning, resulting in a colossal and sustained torrent of ideas that spawned new sects and, for scholars who were heirs of the prophetic tradition, threatened to seriously undermine sound exegesis. Winter explains:

> Monotheism, however, is never as simple as most of its advocates would wish. Its inbuilt paradoxes, which had already exercised and divided Jews and Christians, ensured that most Muslim thinkers came to recognise the need for a formal discipline of argument and proof which could establish the proper sense of a scripture which turned out to be open to many different interpretations. The trigger, in almost every case, was the need to defeat the whims (*ahwāʾ*) of heretics and innovators.[5]

The inbuilt paradoxes of monotheism presented critical challenges for Muslim scholars, who needed to reconcile seeming contradictions, such as God's unicity with the multiplicity of His attributes; the divine incorporeality with divine attributes that appeared to resemble human traits, such as mercy, tenderness, and love; divine foreknowledge and predestination with the free will of humans; the eternality of divine speech with the temporality of the Qur'anic words; a believer's faith status with his transgressions; and other apparent paradoxes, newly debated in the public discourse as Islamdom expanded, that would need a formal kalam to sort out.

The community had also been wracked with political conflict and violence—assassinations, rebellion, and outright civil war—in the first decades after the Prophet's death. In the ensuing chaos, emerging political factions adopted creedal positions on some of these paradoxes. Their concerns, however, were often more political than doctrinal. If a Muslim ruler who committed a grave sin could still be a believer, as mainstream scholars held, then his rule was valid and rebellion was interdicted, but if the transgression meant the ruler lost his faith status, as held by the radical and short-lived Khawarij, then his removal might be justified. And if humans had free will, rulers were accountable for their acts of injustice, whereas a doctrine of outright predestination that rejected free will could absolve them of their iniquities.

Over the next century, several independent thinkers and novel sects arose, with a vast spectrum of opinions within and

etween the groups. These sects included Mu'tazilites, Khawarij, hia, Qadarites, Jabarites, and Murji'ites. The Mu'tazilites had wenty subgroups, each of which anathematized the rest, and he Khawarij also had twenty subgroups.[6] Anathematization ithout scholarly sanction and due process had already led to nternecine conflicts, resulting in violent rebellion within the Iuslim community. For the scholars committed to preserving he prophetic teaching (sunnah), it became evident that a formal cience of dialectic was needed, one that was rooted in both reaon and scripture, in order to defend the exegesis they had inher-ed from the Prophet's companions and to clarify the implica-ions of agreed-upon tenets. Hence, they worked to explicate the ransmitted creed in a monumental framework of new cognitive ames and doctrinal exposition to meet the intellectual chal-enges of their era, without undermining or diluting the heritage equeathed unto them.

In the words of the esteemed theologian Saᶜd al-Dīn l-Taftāzānī, the historical context that led to the formal discilines of Islamic theology and legal theory was as follows:

> The early generations of Muslims, of the companions and followers (God be pleased with them all)—due to the purity of their beliefs, by virtue of the blessing of keeping company with the Prophet ﷺ and their proximity to his time, and due to the scarcity of strife and disagreements, and due to their ability to consult the trustworthy—were in no need of codifying the two sciences [of theology and legal theory], of organizing them into chapters and sections, or of establishing their primary and secondary issues. This condition lasted until much discord and rebellion erupted among the Muslims against their religious leaders, and there appeared divergent views along with the prevalence of heresies, unsanctioned innovation, and stubborn whims. Many verdicts were issued as more strife occurred, and scholars were consulted in the most pressing of matters. So, the latter engaged in rational investigation, the adducing of proofs, independent reasoning, deduction of rulings from scripture, formulation of

> principles and foundational tenets, organization [of the disciplines of theology and legal theory] into chapters and sections, analysis of numerous issues with evidence, refutation of doubtful and confusing matters, specification of terms and nomenclature, and clarification of schools and different views [between orthodoxy and heresy].[7]

These scholars, who represented the broad consensus of the Sunni tradition (*jamāʿah*), called themselves the people of the prophetic way and mainstream consensus (*ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāʿah*) and came to represent normative Islam and its orthodoxy, while divergent sects were recognized as bearers of heretical innovation (*ahl al-bidʿah*).[8] The critical work of two scholars in this discursive enterprise—Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī—launched the eponymous schools of the Ashʿarīs and the Māturīdīs, which represented this orthodoxy. Formal kalam, first initiated by the Muʿtazilites in their rationa explanation and defense of novel doctrines, was appropriated by the Sunnis to deeply elaborate and explicate the Islamic creed and, in so doing, refute the opposition. The Hanbalis were also part of Sunni Islam, and some of their moderate scholars were able to successfully rebut a literalist pseudo-Ḥanbalism that espoused anthropomorphism. However, while some Hanbali were Ashʿarī, many abstained from formal discursive theology, preferring instead to merely transmit prophetic reports and a plain-sense reading of both law and creed and, as such, were termed traditionists (*atharīs*). Kalam proper was discursive b nature, and Sunni theological and metaphysical exploration wa undertaken specifically by Ashʿarism and Māturīdism.

The Māturīdī Tradition

Early Muslim Transoxania (Central Asia beyond the Oxus River was the cradle of a robust intellectual milieu, in both the rational sciences and transmitted scriptural knowledge of Islam. Th predominant school of law was Hanafi, with its intricate juridical methodology and distinctive interpretive principles. In th

science of prophetic sayings (hadith), the greater region of Central Asia was the place of birth (or origin) of all six authors of Sunnism's seminal works on the subject: al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim (d. 261/874), Ibn Mājah (d. 273/887), Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), and al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915). Even outside Islam, the region was host to a multitude of religions and schools of thought: Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and more. One anecdote from the life of the philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 428/1037) speaks to the countless ideas to be found there. Invited to the region to tend to the medical needs of Sultan Nūḥ b. Manṣūr (d. 387/997), Avicenna was recompensed with permission to conduct research in the Bukharan imperial library; he later described how each library room was designated for a separate field of inquiry and recalled the myriad books of the ancients he found there that he had never seen before nor would see thereafter.[9]

This dynamic intellectual ambience in Islam's third/ninth century served as the backdrop of the scholastic work of Imam Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī. Born in Māturīt/Māturīd, a small village on the outskirts of Samarqand (in modern-day Uzbekistan), he was educated in jurisprudence (*furūᶜ*) and theology/legal theory (*uṣūl*) in the Hanafi tradition, with a direct chain of transmission to their master Abū Ḥanīfah, from the town of Kufa in Iraq. Al-Māturīdī's main teachers include Abū Bakr al-Jūzjānī and Abū Naṣr al-ᶜIyāḍī, who were taught by students of the students of Abū Ḥanīfah.[10] Al-ᶜIyāḍī was especially recognized as a venerable theologian of Samarqand, having authored a treatise on the divine attributes, rebutting therein Mu'tazilite doctrine in a somewhat rational kalam form, and also a text defending the Prophet's companions from disparagement.[11] Although both subjects were traditionally espoused by Sunnism (and proto-Sunnism), al-ᶜIyāḍī's two works were unique and possibly the first of their kind in the Eastern Hanafi tradition, as previous creedal works simply listed tenets, without any

kalam-style refutation. It is not unlikely, then, that al-Māturīdī was influenced by his teacher not only in what he learned but also in the use of formal reasoning in a dialectical form. Al-Māturīdī later authored texts of presumably immense influence upon Hanafi scholasticism, such as *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunnah* (On Sunni hermeneutics), an extraordinary exegesis on the Qur'an; *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (The book of monotheism), a masterwork unprecedented in its systematic treatment of theology and style of argumentation; and dozens of short doctrinal treatises refuting predominant heresies of this time. Although accounts of al-Māturīdī's life are notably scant, his influence on Islamic thought is momentous. Clearly, his intellectual heirs directed their attention more to his theological contribution than to his personal biography.

In addition to its diverse intellectual landscape, the region during al-Māturīdī's lifetime was characterized by great political stability under the Sāmānid dynasty, which ruled from 203/819 to 395/1005. After the first civil wars in Islamic history, triggered by the tragic assassination of the third caliph, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān ﵁ (d. 35/656), and lasting past the likewise iniquitous assassination of the fourth caliph, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ﵁ (d. 40/661), the Umayyads gained control and ruled from 41/661 to 132/750, after which the Abbasids assumed power by revolution and ruled as an empire for half a millennium until 656/1258. Yet, as early as the third/ninth century, centralized power in the Abbasid capital of Baghdad started to break down and resulted in a more nominal caliphate, with real power dispersed among the many emergent regional dynasties, such as the Fatimids in North Africa, Egypt, and Syria; the Buyids in Persia and Mesopotamia; and the Samanids in Khurasan (Eastern Persia) and Transoxania. While much of the Nile to Oxus region at this time was governed by Shia rulership, the Samanids were a critical mainstay of Sunnism.[12] Moreover, ruling in an era of political commotion in Islamdom, they displayed a firm dedication to ethics, justice, knowledge, and religion; revived ancient Persian culture, especially language

and literature; and became celebrated for their patronage of Islamic art and architecture.

As such, the Samanids fostered a nurturing environment for intellectual exploration, and al-Māturīdī was among its most noted beneficiaries.[13] Having inherited the Muslim creed from his Hanafi forebears, al-Māturīdī devoted his scholarly pursuits to preserving and defending that creed. Given that the teachings of numerous philosophical and religious traditions had reached Samarqand by his time, al-Māturīdī's enterprise was grounded in the universal paradigm of systematic reasoning (*ʿaql*) with which he addressed the concerns of his interlocutors without diluting the dictates of revelation (*naql/samʿ/sharʿ*). Rooting scripture in rationalism, al-Māturīdī set out to prove the soundness and certitude of theism in general and of Islam in particular. He also explicated the contents and implications of the Islamic faith, clarified misconceptions about the meaning of scripture, and reconciled the seeming contradictions of Muslim doctrine—the inbuilt paradoxes alluded to earlier.

The two aforementioned books by the Hanafi scholastic stand out most saliently in this regard: the *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunnah* and *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*. The former is possibly the first of its kind in that it is a highly theological commentary on the Qur'an; prior exegetical works focused mostly on relating prophetic traditions or exploring linguistic and grammatical issues. In his biography of al-Māturīdī, Ibn Abī al-Wafā' al-Qurashī (d. 775/1373) states regarding the *Ta'wīlāt*, "It is an unparalleled book. No prior work in the entire discipline [of Qur'anic exegesis] even approaches it."[14] Al-Māturīdī not only explores the meaning of verses but also clarifies doctrinal implications and refutes the misinterpretations of various sects, using logical proofs; other supporting verses; and most critically, the precedent of the earliest Muslims. In fact, and related to the title of his work (in Arabic, *ta'wīlāt* is the plural of *ta'wīl*), al-Māturīdī's point of departure is to faithfully convey the meanings of scripture that the first generation of Islam had

provided. He begins his introduction with the statement "The difference between *ta'wīl* and *tafsīr* [the standard term for Qur'anic exegesis] is, as has been said, '*Tafsīr* is the explanation of the companions [of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ], and *ta'wīl* is the commentary of [subsequent] scholars.'"[15] For al-Māturīdī, the former was authoritative, while the latter was but possible or probable. Besides evincing the intellectual humility of the great imam, his emphasis on this critical distinction illustrates how his paradigm of scholastic theology and its emphasis on rationalism never departed from the teachings of the *salaf* but authentically preserved them.

In his magnum opus, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, al-Māturīdī most cogently fulfilled his theological quest; the book has been called his *Summa Theologiae* by the contemporary Bosnian theologian Mustafa Cerić,[16] and it appears to be the earliest theological-dialectical summa that survives from the Islamic heritage. Although prior creedal treatises were written in the Hanafi tradition, the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* is what Ulrich Rudolph, a contemporary Swiss scholar, describes as a "qualitative leap" therefrom, pointing to its novel thematic structure and formalized arguments against opposing groups, along with its range of apologetics and polemics.[17] Throughout the work, al-Māturīdī refutes individual theologians and more than thirty groups or currents of thought, including religions outside Islam and heterodox sects within Islam.[18] He constructs a systematic paradigm of Islamic theology, rooted explicitly in rational and empirical investigation, without compromising revelatory teachings. Unsurprisingly, the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* served as a template for subsequent Māturīdī literature in its overall form, thematic content, and dialectical nature. Indeed, Islam's systematization of revealed knowledge is often understood as a response to foreign ideas, which compelled scholars such as al-Māturīdī to reexamine and rearticulate that knowledge and its implications, while using much of the form, methods, and tools of their intellectual opponents.

Even though al-Māturīdī was celebrated for developing a rich ntellectual framework for the doctrines he inherited, most Māturīdīs saw their school as stemming directly from Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, as suggested by the theological works of his successors, specially the *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn* (The book of Islamic theology) of Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1099) and the *Tabṣirat al-adillah fī uṣūl al-dīn* (An exposition of rational proofs in Islamic theology) of Abū al-Muᶜīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1114).[19] It is difficult to ascerain how much of al-Māturīdī's discourse was a direct transmision from Abū Ḥanīfah, but the Māturīdīs were certainly workng from within the Hanafi tradition; in fact, the terms *Māturīdī* and *Hanafi* are synonymous in some works of theology and legal heory.[20] Nevertheless, al-Māturīdī also addressed novel issues hat his Hanafi predecessors did not. In *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, he examnes topics such as epistemology, the ontic composition of the vorld, detailed proofs of God's existence and attributes, proper methodology with scriptural hermeneutics, divine wisdom, predestination and the ontology of human action, and proofs of the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ and his eschatological ole of intercession. In fact, Cerić suggests that the Hanafi ethos ostered al-Māturīdī's propensity to think independently and his willingness to afford reason a central role in his discourse.[21] Hanafi methodology is recognized by many legal theorists for its strong emphasis on rational investigation and creative thought. However, Hanafi rationalism never compromised the Muslim creed, prophetic practice (sunnah), or the scholarly consensus (*ijmāᶜ*) of the community, for it sought always to contextualize reealed knowledge, not supplant it.

It was precisely due to al-Māturīdī's autonomous investigaions, along with his vital role of constructing a rational framevork to undergird and safeguard the inherited Sunni creed, hat later Hanafis designated the Samarqandī theologian as the eponym of their doctrinal school, their distinguished scholar

(*shaykh*), and the venerable leader of Sunni orthodoxy (*ra'īs ahl al-sunnah*).

The Mutual Acceptance of Sunni Schools

Despite al-Māturīdī's renown in Transoxania and in subsequent Hanafi discourse, the Samarqandī theologian is strangely omitted from much Islamic heresiography (a genre of treatises on heretical sects that also highlighted orthodoxy, such that discussion of al-Māturīdī would seem warranted), including many well-known works: *Al-Farq bayn al-firaq* (The differences between Muslim sects) of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), *Al-Milal wa al-niḥal* (On religious and philosophical sects) of Abū al-Fatḥ al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), and *Al-Muqaddimah* (The introduction) of the later Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406). As such, Rudolph has aptly called al-Māturīdī the "famous unknown"; even today, detailed examinations of his school and works are scant in contemporary studies of Islamic classical theology, although increasingly more attention has been given to him as of late. Historically, the Māturīdī school was relatively unfamiliar in the Nile to Oxus region, even in Abū Ḥanīfah's city of Kufa in Iraq, until the fifth/eleventh century with the rise of the Seljuks, whose westward expansion introduced Māturīdī theology to the local Ashʿarī scholars of the region.[22]

This encounter marks a salient transition in Islamic intellectual history, with the mutual acceptance of Sunni schools. Sunni orthodoxy in the more central lands of Islamdom had hitherto been identified primarily with the Ashʿarī school, whose eponym is the distinguished Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī. A former Mu'tazilite, he renounced Mu'tazilism and sought to rebut it through its own method of systematic reasoning and dialectic and to defend the creed of the early Muslims (*salaf*). In rejecting the ultra-rationalism of the Mu'tazilites, while also refuting the anthropomorphism of literalists who eschewed rationalism, al-Ashʿarī assumed a median position between those two

extremes: one neglecting revelation in an apparent championing of reason and the other neglecting reason in an apparent championing of revelation. Both hermeneutical extremes not only represented unsanctioned innovations in light of the teachings of the early Muslims but also were fallacious, since a rationalism that deviates from scripture and precedent is in reality a quasi-rationalism, and a commitment to revelation without at all invoking reason is in fact noncompliance with revelation, for the scripture itself instructs man to use his intellect. Clearly, a synthetic theology centered on revelation while grounded in reason and its first principles was most authentic to the Qur'an, the prophetic way, and the scholarly example of early Islam. Carving out the middle ground was a characteristic trait of the Ashᶜarī school; it navigated a central pathway between what it saw as pernicious excesses—between Qadarite denial of predestination and Jabarite determinism, between Murji'ite antinomianism and Kharijite anathematization, between the negation of divine attributes and outright corporealism, and so on. (The views of these and other sects will be explored in detail in the text and annotations of *Al-Bidāyah*.) The Samarqandī tradition of al-Māturīdī also found itself between similar extremes, each of which it refuted in its resolve to safeguard the creed inherited from the *salaf* through its Kufan master.

Both the Ashᶜarīs and Māturīdīs were remarkably similar in their systematic defenses of the early Muslim creed, and that essential uniformity was duly noted in the next epoch of Islamic history. In that era, from the time of Nūr al-Dīn al-Zangī (d. 569/1174) to the ascension of the Mamluks, who ruled Egypt from 648/1250 to 922/1517, a concerted effort was made to consolidate the differing presentations of Sunni Islam. Its four schools of law—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali—agreed on the ultimate sources of rulings and shared the same basic paradigm: the Qur'an, the prophetic practice (sunnah), scholarly consensus (*ijmāᶜ*), and legal analogy (*qiyās*). While there were important

differences regarding principles of legal interpretation, those differences were recognized as falling within the scope of precedent encompassed by the vast sunnah and did not lead to outright sectarianism. Earlier periods of high tension were aberrations; the more common order among the schools was acceptance of reasonable differences of opinion, which were seen essentially as a reflection of divine mercy on the community. Scholars affirmed the underlying cohesiveness of the four schools; indeed, the eponyms of the schools and their students venerated one another. Sunnism was additionally fortified by the rulers of that watershed era, particularly the Mamluks, who encouraged the schools' mutual accommodation; as such, it became an established principle that all Sunni legal schools had equal authority and validity and that none of them espoused heterodox opinions. Nevertheless, debates continued, especially through the dialectic style of their teaching manuals, but disagreements were by consensus perceived as occurring within the confines of the broad Sunni orthodoxy and mainstream consensus.

This mutual recognition extended beyond jurisprudence to include Sunni theology, as can be seen, for example, in the work of the esteemed Shafi'i-Ashᶜarī judge Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370). After surveying the literature of the Hanafi-Māturīdī doctrine, al-Subkī concluded that the Transoxanian tradition was a sister school of the Ashᶜarīs: their foundational beliefs were in agreement, and differences pertained only to ancillary matters. Specifically, he identified only thirteen points of disagreement between them, seven of which he deemed purely semantic; of the six actual differences, two are purely theoretical, and all were regarded by most scholars to be relatively minor. So there was no valid basis for one school to charge the other with heresy (*bidᶜah*) or a fortiori with disbelief (*kufr*). Both the Māturīdī and Ashᶜarī schools, though, were in agreement in condemning sects such as the Mu'tazilites, Khawarij, and anthropomorphists as heretical, though still Muslim, and also in regarding certain

philosophical positions and outright corporealism (in interpreting divine qualities) as fully outside Islam. Reflecting the spirit of harmonization that characterized his era, al-Subkī affirms that Sunni orthodoxy comprises two kalam traditions, Ashʿarism and Māturīdism.[23]

Later manuals of Sunnism confirm al-Subkī's assessment; most conspicuous is the commentary of the Ashʿarī scholar Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī on the creed of the Māturīdī scholar Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142). Widely acclaimed across Muslim lands, it was taught in most traditional seminaries of Islamdom including the Levant, Iraq, Anatolia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Indian subcontinent. The universal acceptance of the textbook, which was an Ashʿarī-Māturīdī amalgamation, signifies the essential harmony of the two Sunni expressions, coalesced as they were into one orthodoxy.

On *Al-Bidāyah* and Its Author

Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn (An introduction to Islamic theology) is a text on Māturīdī theology, a concise yet thorough manual of key doctrinal issues that were historically debated in Central Asia. Similar to al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, with which it shares both content and structure, it is a dialectical work that refutes the erroneous positions of groups within Islam and of other religions and philosophies. *Al-Bidāyah* deals with epistemology, the temporality of the cosmos, the cosmological argument for the existence of God, the divine names and attributes, divine dissimilarity from creation, evidence of the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ, and many other issues. The discussions are uncomplicated and unencumbered by technical terminology, and the positions of orthodoxy are presented with rational and scriptural evidence, along with rebuttals of critiques from within and outside Islam. The text is taught to this day in certain regions of Hanafi scholasticism. In some parts of Turkey, for example, students are taught *Al-Bidāyah* after

having studied the primers *Al-Fiqh al-akbar* (The greater jurisprudence) of Abū Ḥanīfah and *Bad' al-amālī* (The beginning of dictations) of the Māturīdī Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ūshī (d. 569/1173); then, foundational theological instruction culminates with the aforementioned *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* (A commentary on al-Nasafī's creed) of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī. Finally, as with any classical text of the Islamic sciences, students should study *Al-Bidāyah* with a qualified teacher who acquired his or her religious knowledge from a qualified teacher, and so on back to scholars of the established Sunni schools and ultimately to the companions and the Prophet himself ﷺ.

The author of *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn* is Nūr al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Ṣābūnī, a foremost sixth-/twelfth-century Māturīdī theologian from Bukhara in Central Asia. He came from a wealthy and noble family, devoted his life to the pursuit of Islamic sacred knowledge, and was blessed to perform the holy pilgrimage (hajj). He studied Hanafi law and legal theory and specialized in kalam, having mastered in particular Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī's *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, arguably the most extraordinary work on Māturīdī theology.[24] Once established as a scholar in the region, al-Ṣābūnī engaged in public debates and teaching, and one of his main students was the esteemed Hanafi jurist Shams al-A'immah al-Kardarī (d. 642/1244). Imam al-Ṣābūnī died on the sixteenth of Ṣafar in the year 580/1184 and was buried in the graveyard of the Seven Judges in Bukhara.[25]

Not much more about his life is found in the biographical works of the Hanafis, yet this is not unusual, as evidenced by brief entries for the likes of Imam al-Māturīdī; the brevity of al-Ṣābūnī's biography is not a reflection of his stature as a theologian.[26] Al-Ṣābūnī's high rank as a *mutakallim* is seen in some biographical works that confer on him titles such as expert (*al-imām*) and distinguished scholar (*al-shaykh*),[27] titles of much distinction in the dynamic scholastic environment of sixth-/twelfth-century Central Asia. It is also mentioned that on his journey to and

from hajj, al-Ṣābūnī delivered numerous sermons, not merely for the lay public but for the scholars of Iraq and Khurasan.[28] More significant is that al-Ṣābūnī is mentioned by the celebrated Ashʿarī metaphysician Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), who in his travels to Central Asia engaged in public debates with several local Hanafi-Māturīdī scholars and judges. The academic scholar Fathalla Kholeif (d. 1434/2013) points out that in his memoirs of those journeys and dialectics, al-Rāzī mentions no theologian by name among his interlocutors except Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, with whom he engaged in three of his four debates on kalam; one might infer from that exclusive reference that al-Ṣābūnī possessed unique prominence in the region as a theologian.[29]

However, the mark of al-Ṣābūnī's eminence to this day is his oeuvre of three textbooks and the excellence exhibited therein. In addition to *Al-Bidāyah*, he wrote a major work on prophetology titled *Al-Muntaqā min ʿiṣmat al-anbiyā'* (The immaculate selection regarding the infallibility of prophets), which refutes unorthodox views that attribute to God's messengers acts of disobedience; the text focuses on misreadings of Qur'anic verses and offers sound interpretations that defend the Sunni doctrine of prophetic sinlessness. His third and most comprehensive work is his magnum opus, *Al-Kifāyah fī al-hidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn* (The sufficiency in guidance: On Islamic theology), often referred to simply as *Al-Kifāyah* (The sufficiency), an exceptionally detailed compendium of Māturīdī kalam positions. His *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn* is a summary of and an introduction to *Al-Kifāyah*.[30]

Still, it is *Al-Bidāyah* for which al-Ṣābūnī is arguably most well-known; a Hanafi appellation for him is tied to that particular work (*ṣāḥib al-Bidāyah*). His introduction was widely accepted for its reliable transmission of the Māturīdī school, coupled with its intellectual rigor and brevity in language. The authoritativeness of the text within the theological tradition can be gleaned from its citation in subsequent works, such as the *Ishārāt al-marām* (Indications of one's aspiration) of Kamāl al-Dīn

al-Bayāḍī (d. 1097/ 1686); *Al-Safīnah* (The ship) of Rāghib Pāshā (d. 1176/1763); and most notably, Imam al-Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, a classic of the scholastic heritage and arguably the most widespread text of Sunni theology taught in the Muslim world.

It is perhaps fitting to conclude with a note regarding the relevance of *Al-Bidāyah*, and of classical Islamic theology in general, to the intellectually caustic climate that Muslims and all theists face today. Western philosophy has undergone radical shifts from the Age of Enlightenment into postmodernism, and its defining characteristics now include skepticism, moral relativism, and critical theory, while theism has come to be seen as antiquated or outright irrational. The philosophical upheaval of traditional metaphysics was accompanied by disquieting scientific findings, such as quantum indeterminacy; and novel paradigms and proposals, such as Darwinian evolution and superstring theory. Compounding that, the past century has witnessed two world wars, numerous painful revolutions, alarming climate changes, and persistent global poverty, the collective pain of which has weighed heavily on humankind. Media and technology unwittingly thrust the suffering from all corners of the globe into our lives, causing deep crises of faith among large numbers of people, and transhumanism threatens our very humanity by dismissing the existence of a soul or a spiritual reality of the human person. Like al-Ashʿarī, al-Māturīdī, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), al-Rāzī, and other philosophical theologians of Islam, theists today face unprecedented thought currents and psychological trauma, both of which might challenge one's belief in God, and even one's belief in what it means to be human. Yet, the metaphysicians of yore clearly conceptualized the challenges of their time and engaged in a rational discourse with their interlocutors to faithfully express the prophetic legacy in their eras.

And therein lies the demanding task before theologians today—not merely to reproduce the debates of the past,

using their forms and methods alone, but to formulate a genuine contemporary kalam, with contemporary tools and language, that engages the questions, concerns, and misgivings of modernity. The traditional kalam must serve as a foundation upon which modern discourse is built; the new chapter must be part of the same book. Yet more is needed. And just as the venture of classical Islamic theology has always been enriched by its engagements with others, so too may a contemporary dialectic propagate an even more robust discipline of theology for future seekers of reality, all the while reaffirming the creed of all prophets and messengers ﷺ sent by God to man. Reconnecting to classical kalam would appear to be a felicitous beginning to embark on this critical journey. And God knows best.

ENDNOTES

1 Traditional Islam has a rich heritage of protecting non-Muslim religious minorities and majorities. According to Islamic creed, Islam does abrogate all prior religions and therefore, with respect to those who have heard and understood its message, asserts its salvific exclusivity in the afterlife; yet faith is a volitional act, which, by definition, cannot be the object of coercion. Thus, beyond mere toleration, Islamic law granted inviolability to other religious communities and even their internal denominations, such that each faith community could preserve for its adherents the integrity of its doctrines, laws, and customs. For more detail, see Abdal Hakim Murad, *Qur'anic Truth and the Meaning of 'Dhimma'* (Dubai: Kalam Research and Media, 2010).

2 A second interpretation of Kierkegaard's view of faith, based on a less literal and perhaps more subtle reading of his discourse, is that faith is not to embrace the logically absurd but is rather above reason, since, by definition, what is infinite and eternal cannot be contained in the finite and temporal categories of the intellect. See William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: The Modern Voyage 1400–1900*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002), 411–13.

Such a view is more congruent with classical Sunni doctrine, according to which, God's existence and attributes can be rationally demonstrated and thus expressed by propositions (e.g., God is necessarily existent,

God is eternal, God is one and unique, God is omnipotent), yet God's reality (*ḥaqīqah*) is ineffable and thus far beyond the reaches of the human intellect. Only God can truly know God. Yet the "rulings of His divinity"—His necessary existence, eternality, unicity, omnipotence, etc.—are evident for humans and accessible to rational deliberation. Hence, the foundation of faith is sound knowledge, the ground of which is metaphysics and the immutable laws of logic.

3 As noted by Imam al-Ghazālī in *Al-Qisṭās al-mustaqīm* (The just balance) and recently by Rosalind Ward Gwynne in *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Qur'an: God's Arguments* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2004).

4 Tim Winter, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5.

5 Winter, introduction, 5–6.

6 ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq bayn al-firaq* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, n.d.), 24.

7 Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd b. ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, ed. Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī, 2nd ed. (Karachi: Maktabat al-Bushrā, 2011), 14–15.

8 Throughout this text, the term "Sunni orthodoxy and mainstream consensus" is used to denote the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāʿah*, which represents the historically normative understanding and exposition of Islamic doctrine. The conception of orthodoxy in Islamic theology differs greatly from its counterpart in Christian theology, for the latter evinced a hierarchical structure of ecclesial authority notably absent from Islamic orthodoxy, which was founded instead on the principle of scholarly consensus. What Christianity imposed from the top down, Islam seemed to accomplish from the bottom up; in the rare instances when the state imposed creed through coercion, the Muslim laity only become hardened in its renunciation of the imposed doctrine. As Tim Winter explains:

> Lacking sacraments and a true hierarchy, Islam possessed no mechanisms for imposing dogmatic conformity on a society that certainly did not recognise Enlightenment-style "tolerance", but which nonetheless evolved means of allowing and even legitimising profound differences in law, mysticism and doctrine. Hence the four schools of Sunnī jurisprudence came to be seen as equivalently valid, while

a less formal attitude presumed the concurrent viability of the major Sufi orders (*ṭuruq*), and of the three great Sunnī theological schools of Ashʿarism, Māturīdism and Ḥanbalism. Despite the fury of so much interdenominational polemic, classical Islam knew only two episodes of systematic state-backed inquisition: the Mu'tazilite persecution of their rivals under the Abbasid caliphs between the years 833 and 848, and, in the sixteenth century, the brutal destruction of Iranian Sunnism under the Shīʿī revolutionary regime of the Ṣafavids. Apart from these two experiences, which generated or intensified a bitterness against Mu'tazilism and Shi'ism which lingered for centuries, the central Islamic lands were as religiously diverse as Latin Christendom was religiously homogenous. Hard-line Mu'tazilism and Shīʿism, which readily invoked the principle of *takfīr* (the anathematization of fellow Muslims), the move which had characterised the Khārijite revolts of the Umayyad period, were precisely the type of religious extremism (*ghuluww*) which Ashʿarite theorists dreaded. (*The Cambridge Companion*, 7)

9 Avicenna's observations about the Bukharan library, the countless worldviews and ideas in early Muslim Central Asia, and the possible significance of that intellectual vitality for the Māturīdī school are discussed by Mustafa Cerić in *Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islām: A Study of the Theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995), 30, and by Sherman A. Jackson in *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 100. Also, Jackson notes how the greater region was the place of origin of the aforementioned six hadith scholars.

10 Abū al-Fidā' Qāsim b. Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), 249–50; ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Wafā' al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyyah fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw, 5 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1993), 3:360–61; Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī, *Al-Fawā'id al-bahiyyah fī tarājim al-Ḥanafiyyah* (Beirut: Sharikat Dār al-Arqam b. Abī al-Arqam, 1998), 319–20; Cerić, *Roots*, 33.

11 Ulrich Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 136.

12 D. G. Tor, "Samanids (819–1005)," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Gerhard Bowering et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 485.

13 Cerić, *Roots*, 27–29.

14 Ibn Abī al-Wafā' al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyyah*, 3:360.

15 Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-sunnah*, ed. Fāṭimah Yūsuf al-Khaymī, 5 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2004), 1:1.

16 Cerić, *Roots*, 46.

17 Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, 190.

18 For a precise list of these theological opponents, see Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, 149–50. Rudolph proceeds to demonstrate that al-Māturīdī did not directly confront all of these opponents in Samarqand, nor was his theological discourse shaped by all of them to the same extent. Some groups and creeds were prevalent there, while others were found in distant lands, yet their ideas had reached al-Māturīdī's scholastic environment in varying degrees.

19 The Sunni theologian Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, for example, states in *Al-Muqaddimāt*, "Al-Māturīdī did not invent an approach, but was rather an expositor of the way of Abū Ḥanīfah and his followers." Ṣalāḥ Muḥammad Abū al-Ḥājj, *Imām al-a'immah al-fuqahā' Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nuʿmān* (Amman: Al-Warrāq, 2006), 198. See also Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, 4–5.

20 An example from the Hanafi legal tradition can be found in the *Ḥāshiyat nasamāt al-asḥār*, by Imam Ibn ʿĀbidīn. In his discussion about whether good and evil can be known by reason alone, independent of revelation, Ibn ʿĀbidīn highlights the difference of opinion between the Ashʿarīs and the Māturīdīs and concludes: "So, according to the Ashʿarī scholars and contrary to *our view*, it [good and evil] cannot be known except after revelation and a prophet," thus ascribing the Māturīdī position to the Hanafi school ("our view"), given that the text is an advanced work on Hanafi legal theory. See Muḥammad Amīn b. ʿUmar b. ʿĀbidīn, *Ḥāshiyat nasamāt al-asḥār ʿalā sharḥ ifāḍat al-anwār ʿalā matn uṣūl al-manār* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1979), 46.

An example from the Māturīdī theological tradition can be found in the *Kitāb al-musāmarah*, by Imam Kamāl b. Abī Sharīf. Commenting on the discussion of the Māturīdī doctrine of free will and *kasb* (*kasb* is a word without

English equivalent, though is sometimes translated as "acquisition"), the author states explicitly, "So, this is the doctrine of *kasb* according to the Hanafi school." See Kamāl al-Dīn b. Abī Sharīf, *Kitāb al-musāmarah fī sharḥ al-musāyarah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2002), 113.

21 Cerić, *Roots*, 34. It must be underscored, though, that Ashʿarism also developed into a systematized discursive theology that grounded the inherited creed in rationality, particularly with the contributions of intellectual giants such as Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233). The subsequent few centuries of Sunni theological discourse reflected a genuine amalgam of Ashʿarism and Māturīdism.

22 Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, 1–3.

23 Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, 7–9.

24 See, for example, Fathalla Kholeif, introduction to *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, by Nūr al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Ṣābūnī (Alexandria: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1969), 9, who likens the status of Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī among the Māturīdīs to the status of such masters as al-Bāqillānī and al-Ghazālī among the Ashʿarīs. In fact, Sherman Jackson notes, "One thing, however, is certain: Māturīdism's relative obscurity was unrelated to its having any less sophistication than Ashʿarism. Indeed, of the classical Ashʿarīs—al-Bāqillānī, al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, even al-Rāzī—none produced anything even approaching the depth and comprehensiveness of Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī's *Tabṣirat al-adillah*" [Islam and the problem of black suffering], 102–3.

25 See Qāsim b. Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 105; Ibn Abī al-Wafā' al-Qurashī, *Al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyyah*, 328–29; al-Laknawī, *Al-Fawā'id al-bahiyyah*, 74; Bekir Topaloğlu (d. 1437/2016), introduction to *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, by Nūr al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Ṣābūnī (Ankara: Riyāsat al-Shu'ūn al-Dīniyyah, 1995), 9; Kholeif, introduction to *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 7–8. (Both the Ankaran and the Alexandrian publications of *Al-Bidāyah* were used for this translation.)

26 Kholeif, introduction to al-Ṣābūnī's *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 8.

27 Kholeif, introduction to al-Ṣābūnī's *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 7, citing the Hanafi biographer Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Kafawī (d. 990/1582) in his *Katā'ib aʿlām al-akhyār min fuqahā' madhhab al-Nuʿmān al-mukhtār*.

28 Topaloğlu, introduction to al-Ṣābūnī's *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 9.

29 Kholeif, introduction to al-Ṣābūnī's *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 9–10.

30 Topaloğlu, introduction to al-Ṣābūnī's *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 10–11.

An Introduction to Islamic Theology

On the Arabic Text and English Annotation

THIS TRANSLATION IS based on two published versions of the Arabic text: the 1969 Dār al-Maʿārif publication, edited by Fathalla Kholeif, and the 1995 Riyāsat al-Shu'ūn al-Dīniyyah publication, edited by Bekir Topaloğlu. The Dār al-Maʿārif publication is based on the Tübingen and El Escorial manuscripts of *Al-Bidāyah*. The Riyāsat al-Shu'ūn al-Dīniyyah publication is a critical edition based on the Laleli, Ashir Effendi, El Escorial, and Tübingen manuscripts of *Al-Bidāyah*, along with their marginal glosses; the Dār al-Maʿārif publication; and the Laleli manuscript of Imam al-Ṣābūnī's larger theological work that *Al-Bidāyah* is a summary of and an introduction to *Al-Kifāyah fī al-hidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*.

The editors of both publications detail the differences in wording of the text found in those original sources. Generally, the differences in wording are minor and do not significantly alter the meanings. The Arabic text in this translation is a collation of the two published versions, with its own punctuation, paragraph breaks, and complete voweling, done by the translator and editorial team. The original Arabic text has forty sections, five of which have no Arabic title except "Section" (*faṣl*). One of them was left untranslated since it is merely transitional; for the other four, an English title describing the subject matter was added in the translation. Six general chapter headings were also added to the English text to provide the reader with the main themes of the forty sections; these chapter headings are listed in the table of contents under the translation heading.

The English endnotes to this translation provide explanations of key doctrinal issues, taken from various sources of both Ashʿarī and Māturīdī discourse; short biographies of individuals mentioned in the text; and citations of prophetic sayings (*aḥādīth*) referenced in the text.

TRANSLATION AND NOTES

An Introduction to Islamic Theology

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

PRAISE BELONGS TO God alone, possessor of majesty and beneficence. May His blessings be upon His Messenger Muḥammad, the best of creation, and upon his folk and noble companions.

[The Shaykh and Imam, Nūr al-Dīn Nāṣir al-Ḥaqq Abū al-Maḥāmid Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣābūnī al-Bukhārī—may God immerse him in His forgiveness and let him reside in the center of His gardens—says:] To proceed: With the praise of God and by His bounty, once the completion of the book *Al-Kifāyah fī al-hidāyah* (The sufficiency in guidance) was facilitated [by God], some of my associates requested that I summarize from it the most essential aspects of the subject, such that it be more concise in wording and easier for mastery. So I sought divine guidance in that decision, along with divine assistance and protection from mistakes and defects, in both speech and action. He alone is our sufficiency and the best to rely on, the best master and best helper.

البِدَايَةُ فِي أُصُولِ الدِّينِ

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ذِي الجَلَالِ وَالإِكْرَامِ وَالصَّلَاةُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ خَيْرِ الْأَنَامِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْكِرَامِ .

قَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ نُورُ الدِّينِ نَاصِرُ الْحَقِّ أَبُو الْمَحَامِدِ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مَحْمُودِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصَّابُونِيُّ الْبُخَارِيُّ تَغَمَّدَهُ اللهُ بِغُفْرَانِهِ وَأَسْكَنَهُ بُحْبُوحَةَ جِنَانِهِ : وَبَعْدُ ، لَمَّا تَيَسَّرَ الْفَرَاغُ ، بِحَمْدِ اللهِ وَمَنِّهِ ، مِنْ كِتَابِ (الْكِفَايَةُ فِي الْهِدَايَةِ) الْتَمَسَ مِنِّي بَعْضُ الْأَصْحَابِ أَنْ أَخْتَصِرَ مِنْهُ مَا هُوَ الْعُمْدَةُ فِي الْبَابِ ، لِيَكُونَ أَوْجَزَ فِي اللَّفْظِ وَأَسْهَلَ لِلْحِفْظِ . فَاسْتَخَرْتُ اللهَ فِي ذَلِكَ وَاسْتَعَنْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاسْتَعْصَمْتُهُ عَنِ الزَّلَلِ وَالخَلَلِ فِي الْقَوْلِ وَالعَمَلِ . وَهُوَ حَسْبُنَا وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ، نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ .

The Existence and Attributes of God

ON EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge[1] is of two types: eternal (*qadīm*)[2] and temporal (*ḥādith*). Eternal knowledge is that which is ascribed to the divine entity; it bears no resemblance to knowledge possessed by temporal creatures.

Temporal knowledge is of two types: innate (*ḍarūrī*) and acquired (*iktisābī*). Innate knowledge is that which God, the exalted, creates in the knower without his acquisition or choice—whereby he has no doubt regarding it—like knowledge of his own existence or of the changing of his states, such as hunger, thirst, pleasure, or pain. All sentient creatures possess this type of knowledge. Acquired knowledge is that which God, the exalted, creates in the servant with the intermediary of the servant's acquisition and choice—namely, taking it from its sources. These sources are three: the sound senses (*ḥawāss salīmah*), a true narration (*khabar ṣādiq*), and reasoning (*naẓar al-ʿaql*).[3]

As for the senses, they are five: hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. By each sense, one gains knowledge of that which is specific to it.[4]

As for a true narration, there are two types:

1. A narration of incontestable multiple-chain transmission (*khabar mutawātir*)—namely, what is heard separately from numerous individuals, such that it is inconceivable that they could have mutually agreed upon fabrication [or coincidentally made the same error]. This is a source of necessary knowledge, such as knowledge of bygone kings and distant lands.

القَوْلُ فِي مَدَارِكِ الْعُلُومِ

العِلْمُ نَوْعَانِ : قَدِيمٌ وَحَادِثٌ . فَالْقَدِيمُ هُوَ الْقَائِمُ بِذَاتِ الْبَارِي ، وَلَا يُشْبِهُ عِلْمَ الْحَادِثِ .

العِلْمُ الْحَادِثُ نَوْعَانِ : ضَرُورِيٌّ وَاكْتِسَابِيٌّ . فَالضَّرُورِيُّ مَا يُحْدِثُهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي الْعَالِمِ مِنْ غَيْرِ كَسْبِهِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ ، كَالْعِلْمِ بِوُجُودِ نَفْسِهِ وَتَغَيُّرِ أَحْوَالِهِ مِنَ الْجُوعِ وَالْعَطَشِ وَاللَّذَّةِ وَالْأَلَمِ ، بِحَيْثُ لَا يَتَشَكَّكُ فِيهِ ، وَيَشْتَرِكُ فِي هَذَا النَّوْعِ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ جَمِيعُ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ . وَالْاِكْتِسَابِيُّ مَا يُحْدِثُهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي الْعَبْدِ بِوَاسِطَةِ كَسْبِهِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ ، وَهُوَ مُبَاشَرَةُ أَسْبَابِهِ . وَأَسْبَابُهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ : الْحَوَاسُّ السَّلِيمَةُ وَالْخَبَرُ الصَّادِقُ وَنَظَرُ الْعَقْلِ .

أَمَّا الْحَوَاسُّ فَهِيَ خَمْسٌ : السَّمْعُ وَالْبَصَرُ وَالشَّمُّ وَالذَّوْقُ وَاللَّمْسُ . وَيُعْلَمُ بِكُلِّ حَاسَّةٍ مَا يَخْتَصُّ بِهَا إِذَا اسْتُعْمِلَتْ فِيهِ .

وَأَمَّا الْخَبَرُ الصَّادِقُ فَنَوْعَانِ :

أَحَدُهُمَا الْخَبَرُ الْمُتَوَاتِرُ ، وَهُوَ مَا يُسْمَعُ مِنْ أَشْخَاصٍ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ فِي أَحْوَالٍ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ بِحَيْثُ لَا يُتَوَهَّمُ أَنَّهُمْ تَوَافَقُوا عَلَى الْكَذِبِ . وَهُوَ سَبَبٌ لِلْعِلْمِ الضَّرُورِيِّ ، كَالْعِلْمِ بِالْمُلُوكِ الْمَاضِيَةِ وَالْبُلْدَانِ النَّائِيَةِ .

2. A narration supported by a miracle (*muʿjizah*) of a prophet; it is a source of categorical knowledge (*ʿilm qaṭʿī*) yet by way of inference (*istidlāl*).[5]

As for reasoning, it too is a means of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge that results from it is of two types:

1. Self-evident (*ḍarūrī*)—also called axiomatic [or first principles] (*badīhī*)—which occurs at first glance without any reflection, such as knowledge that the whole of a thing is greater than its part

2. Inferential (*istidlālī*), which requires some level of thought, such as knowledge of the presence of fire upon seeing smoke

The obtaining of knowledge from these [three] sources [the senses, true narrations, and reasoning] is a matter that is obvious to anyone who is fair and does not resist out of obstinacy. A group called the *sophists* (*al-sūfasṭā'iyyah*) deny all of the above; some of them deny the realities of things, and others deny knowledge of the realities of things. Yet there is no debate with such people except by a painful blow or burning with fire, whereby they would be forced to admit [the realities of things and knowledge of the realities of things].[6]

The Buddhists (*al-Sumaniyyah*) and the Brahmins (*al-Barāhimah*) deny[7] the narration as one of the sources of knowledge, which is similar to the denial of the sophists,[8] for they deny necessary knowledge by means of a narration of multiple-chain transmission. Yet if such a narration were not a source of knowledge, how would a person know his parent, brother, uncle, and other relatives? For there is no way of knowing these people aside from a narration.[9]

وَالثَّانِي الْخَبَرُ الْمُؤَيَّدُ بِالْمُعْجِزَةِ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ، وَهُوَ سَبَبٌ لِلْعِلْمِ الْقَطْعِيِّ وَلَكِن بِوَاسِطَةِ الِاسْتِدْلَالِ.

وَأَمَّا نَظَرُ الْعَقْلِ فَهُوَ سَبَبٌ لِلْعِلْمِ أَيْضًا. وَالْعِلْمُ الْحَاصِلُ مِنْهُ نَوْعَانِ: ضَرُورِيٌّ، وَيُسَمَّى بَدِيهِيًّا، وَهُوَ مَا يَحْصُلُ بِأَوَّلِ النَّظَرِ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَفَكُّرٍ، كَالْعِلْمِ بِأَنَّ كُلَّ الشَّيْءِ أَعْظَمُ مِنْ جُزْئِهِ؛ وَاسْتِدْلَالِيٌّ، وَهُوَ مَا يُحْتَاجُ فِيهِ إِلَى نَوْعِ تَفَكُّرٍ، كَالْعِلْمِ بِوُجُودِ النَّارِ عِنْدَ رُؤْيَةِ الدُّخَانِ.

وَحُصُولُ الْعِلْمِ بِهَذِهِ الْأَسْبَابِ أَمْرٌ مُشَاهَدٌ لِمَنْ أَنْصَفَ وَلَمْ يُعَانِدْ. وَأَنْكَرَ ذَلِكَ كُلَّهُ طَائِفَةٌ يُقَالُ لَهُمُ السُّوفَسْطَائِيَّةُ؛ فَأَنْكَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ حَقَائِقَ الْأَشْيَاءِ، وَأَنْكَرَ بَعْضُهُمُ الْعِلْمَ بِحَقَائِقِ الْأَشْيَاءِ؛ وَلَا مُنَاظَرَةَ مَعَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا بِالضَّرْبِ الْمُؤْلِمِ أَوِ الْإِحْرَاقِ بِالنَّارِ لِيَضْطَرُّوا إِلَى الْإِقْرَارِ.

وَأَنْكَرَتِ السُّمَنِيَّةُ وَالْبَرَاهِمَةُ كَوْنَ الْخَبَرِ مِنْ أَسْبَابِ الْعِلْمِ، وَهُوَ قَرِيبٌ مِنْ إِنْكَارِ السُّوفَسْطَائِيَّةِ، فَإِنَّهُمْ يُنْكِرُونَ الْعِلْمَ الضَّرُورِيَّ بِوَاسِطَةِ الْخَبَرِ الْمُتَوَاتِرِ. وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنِ الْخَبَرُ الْمُتَوَاتِرُ مِنْ أَسْبَابِ الْعِلْمِ كَيْفَ يَعْرِفُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَالِدَهُ وَأَخَاهُ وَعَمَّهُ وَسَائِرَ أَقَارِبِهِ، إِذْ لَا طَرِيقَ لِمَعْرِفَةِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا بِالْخَبَرِ.

The heretics (*al-mulḥidah*), the extreme Shia (*al-rawāfiḍ*), and the anthropomorphists (*al-mushabbihah*) deny the intellect as a source of knowledge because logical conclusions are contradictory due to differences among logicians. We respond: And how is it that you know that logical conclusions are contradictory? If you say by the intellect, then you have contradicted yourselves, as essentially you are saying, "By use of the intellect, we know that nothing can be known by the intellect." If you say by a narration, then how do you know if it is true or false [since that distinction can be known only by reason]? If you say by the senses, then you are simply being obstinate.

We then say: Logical conclusions are not contradictory; rather, logicians themselves simply disagree with one another, either due to some having inferior intellects or due to some not fulfilling all the requisite conditions for proper reasoning. Some will therefore reach a conclusion based on whim [or prejudice] or opinion, while claiming it to be a logical conclusion. For example, if a group is asked, "What is three times three?" they will not disagree with each other that the answer is nine. Yet if they were asked, "What is thirteen times thirteen?" then some might disagree with others due to what we mentioned but not due to the contradiction of logical conclusions regarding this number. Compare this matter with eyesight: onlookers do not disagree about the moon on a clear dark night, yet there very well could be disagreement regarding the crescent at the beginning of the lunar month, due to either faulty vision or a mistake by the one looking; this issue [regarding logic] is no different.[10]

According to us, with respect to innate human nature, intellects are of varying capacities. The Mu'tazilites disagree yet have no basis to do so: How many young children, with no prior experience or education, can make logical deductions that grown adults prove incapable of?

وَأَنْكَرَتِ الْمُلْحِدَةُ وَالرَّافِضَةُ وَالْمُشَبِّهَةُ كَوْنَ الْعَقْلِ مِنْ أَسْبَابِ الْعِلْمِ. قَالُوا لِأَنَّ قَضَايَا الْعَقْلِ مُتَنَاقِضَةٌ لِاخْتِلَافِ الْعُقَلَاءِ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ. قُلْنَا وَبِمَ عَلِمْتُمْ أَنَّ قَضَايَا الْعَقْلِ مُتَنَاقِضَةٌ؟ فَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ بِالْعَقْلِ فَقَدْ نَاقَضْتُمْ حَيْثُ قُلْتُمْ عَلِمْنَا بِالْعَقْلِ أَن لَا يُعْلَمَ بِالْعَقْلِ شَيْءٌ، وَإِنْ قُلْتُم بِالْخَبَرِ قُلْنَا فَبِمَ عَلِمْتُمْ أَنَّهُ صِدْقٌ أَمْ كَذِبٌ؟ وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ بِالْحِسِّ فَقَدْ عَانَدتُمْ.

ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لَا تَتَنَاقَضُ قَضَايَا الْعَقْلِ، وَإِنَّمَا اخْتَلَفَ الْعُقَلَاءُ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ إِمَّا لِقُصُورِ عَقْلِهِمْ عَن بُلُوغِ دَرَجَةِ النَّظَرِ أَوْ لِتَقْصِيرِهِمْ فِي شَرَائِطِ النَّظَرِ. فَيَحْكُمُ بَعْضُهُمْ بِالْهَوَى وَالظَّنِّ وَيَدَّعِي أَنَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بِالْعَقْلِ، كَجَمَاعَةٍ سُئِلُوا كَمْ ثَلَاثَةٌ فِي ثَلَاثَةٍ، لَا يَخْتَلِفُونَ فِي جَوَابِهِمْ أَنَّهُ تِسْعَةٌ؛ وَلَوْ سُئِلُوا كَمْ ثَلَاثَةَ عَشَرَ فِي ثَلَاثَةَ عَشَرَ، رُبَّمَا يَخْتَلِفُ جَوَابُهُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ لِمَا قُلْنَا، لَا لِاخْتِلَافِ قَضِيَّةِ الْعَقْلِ فِي هَذَا الْعَدَدِ. وَاعْتَبِرْ هَذَا بِنَظَرِ الْعَيْنِ، فَإِنَّ الْقَمَرَ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ لَا يَخْتَلِفُ فِيهِ النُّظَّارُ؛ أَمَّا الْهِلَالُ فِي أَوَّلِ الشَّهْرِ فَرُبَّمَا يَقَعُ فِيهِ اخْتِلَافٌ، إِمَّا لِقُصُورِ النَّظَرِ أَوْ لِتَقْصِيرِ النَّاظِرِ، فَكَذَا هَذَا.

ثُمَّ الْعُقُولُ مُتَفَاوِتَةٌ فِي أَصْلِ الْفِطْرَةِ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ. وَلَا وَجْهَ لِإِنْكَارِهِ، فَكَم مِنْ صَبِيٍّ صَغِيرٍ يَسْتَخْرِجُ بِعَقْلِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ سَابِقَةِ تَجْرِبَةٍ وَلَا تَعَلُّمٍ مَا يَعْجِزُ عَنْهُ الْبَالِغُ الْكَبِيرُ.

The bearer of the sacred law himself explicitly mentioned the deficiency in the intellect of women, when he said, “Indeed, they are deficient in intellect and religious practice.”[11] Similarly, the Lawgiver has made the testimony of two women equivalent to that of one man,[12] due to the inadequacy of the instrument of precision—namely, the intellect.[13] Despite this, however, the least capacity to which the term *intellect* may be applied is sufficient for knowing the Creator, so no one is excused for being ignorant of one’s Maker.

ON THE TEMPORALITY OF THE COSMOS AND NECESSARY EXISTENCE OF THE CREATOR

Cosmos (*ʿālam*) is a noun referring to all that exists other than God, the exalted [that is, the totality of metaphysical possibilities that actually exist], since it is a sign (*ʿalam*) indicating the existence of its Creator. It has two components: substances (*ʿayn*, pl. *aʿyān*) and accidents (*ʿaraḍ*, pl. *aʿrāḍ*). A substance is that which directly occupies space, without ascription to anything else that directly occupies space, while an accident is that which exists only as ascribed to a substance and cannot conceivably exist otherwise.

Substances are of two types: singular, called a *particle* (*jawhar*, pl. *jawāhir*), which is indivisible, and compound, called a *body* (*jism*, pl. *ajsām*), the smallest of which is two particles. The philosophers and some Mu‘tazilites deny the indivisible particle.[14] This is an absurd position, for it implies that the components of a mustard seed are equal to those of a mountain, as each of the two would be endless [if there were no indivisible particles], yet one infinite cannot be larger than another infinite.[15] Also, since the parts of a body are combined by the action of God, the exalted, we ask whether or not God, the exalted, is able to create separation instead of combination: if you say He is unable to do so, you have ascribed incapacity to Him, yet if you say He is able, then the indivisible particle has been affirmed.[16]

وَقَدْ صَرَّحَ صَاحِبُ الشَّرْعِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِنُقْصَانِ عَقْلِ النِّسَاءِ ، حَيْثُ قَالَ « إِنَّهُنَّ نَاقِصَاتُ الْعَقْلِ وَالدِّينِ » . وَكَذَا أَقَامَ الشَّارِعُ شَهَادَةَ امْرَأَتَيْنِ مَقَامَ شَهَادَةِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ لِنُقْصَانِ آلَةِ الضَّبْطِ ، وَهُوَ الْعَقْلُ . وَلكِن مَعَ هَذَا ، قَدْرُ مَا يَنْطَلِقُ عَلَيْهِ اسْمُ الْعَقْلِ يَكْفِي لِمَعْرِفَةِ الصَّانِعِ ، فَلَا يُعْذَرُ فِي الْجَهْلِ بِخَالِقِهِ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي حُدُوثِ الْعَالَمِ وَوُجُوبِ الصَّانِعِ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ

الْعَالَمُ اسْمٌ لِمَا سِوَى اللهِ تَعَالَى ، لِأَنَّهُ عَلَمٌ عَلَى وُجُودِ الصَّانِعِ . وَهُوَ قِسْمَانِ : أَعْيَانٌ وَأَعْرَاضٌ . فَالْأَعْيَانُ مَا تَقُومُ بِنَفْسِهَا ، وَيَصِحُّ وُجُودُهَا لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ . وَالْأَعْرَاضُ مَا تَقُومُ بِغَيْرِهَا ، وَلَا يُعْقَلُ خُلُوُّهَا عَنِ الْمَحَلِّ .

ثُمَّ الْأَعْيَانُ قِسْمَانِ : مُفْرَدٌ ، وَيُسَمَّى جَوْهَرًا ، وَهُوَ الْجُزْءُ الَّذِي لَا يَتَجَزَّأُ ؛ وَمُرَكَّبٌ ، وَيُسَمَّى جِسْمًا ، وَأَقَلُّهُ جَوْهَرَانِ . وَأَنْكَرَتِ الْفَلَاسِفَةُ وَبَعْض الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ الْجُزْءَ الَّذِي لَا يَتَجَزَّأُ ، وَهَذَا قَوْلٌ فَاسِدٌ ، لِأَنَّهُ يُؤَدِّي إِلَى أَنْ تَكُونَ أَجْزَاءُ الْخَرْدَلَةِ مُسَاوِيَةً لِأَجْزَاءِ الْجَبَلِ ، لِأَنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا لَا يَتَنَاهَى ، وَمَا لَا يَتَنَاهَى لَا يَكُونُ أَكْبَرَ مِمَّا لَا يَتَنَاهَى ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الِاجْتِمَاعَ فِي أَجْزَاءِ الْجِسْمِ لَمَّا كَانَ بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، نَقُولُ هَلْ يَقْدِرُ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى خَلْقِ الِافْتِرَاقِ بَدَلًا عَنِ الِاجْتِمَاعِ أَمْ لَا ؟ إِنْ قُلْتَ لَا يَقْدِرُ فَقَدْ وَصَفْتَهُ بِالْعَجْزِ ؛ وَإِنْ قُلْتَ يَقْدِرُ فَقَدْ ثَبَتَ الْجُزْءُ الَّذِي لَا يَتَجَزَّأُ .

As for a body, according to some mathematicians, it is that which has three dimensions: length, width, and depth. According to us, a composite of two particles is sufficient to be labeled *body* (*jism*), since if one particle were to be added to one of two bodies [each originally having only two dimensions] to form its third dimension, it would be correct to say, "This is a larger body (*ajsam*) than that." So, if the original composition were not sufficient for each to be labeled *body*, then one could not be deemed a larger body by the addition of one dimension. Hence, the correct definition of a body is a composite or combination of two or more particles.

As for an accident, linguistically, it is a noun referring to that which does not last; its formal definition is that which subsists in something else and which does not last at all. There are over thirty types, including colors, positions, tastes, scents, sounds, abilities, and volitions. The atheists (*al-dahriyyah*), the dualists (*al-thanawiyyah*), and some Mu'tazilites deny that accidents are distinct from substances; this is an incorrect position, as proven by the fact that if a black hair turns white, it is valid to say that it is the very same hair, yet, by consensus, whiteness differs from blackness. We then add that if a black hair were black in and of itself, it would not have changed from its original state with the existence of the same substance necessitating its blackness. Once it turns white, it is clear that it had been black due to something additional, whereby it changed with the change of that additional aspect.[17]

As for the eternal, it is that with no beginning of existence, while the temporal is that which was not and then was.[18] Once this is understood, we state that it is impossible[19] for substances to be divested of accidents, which are temporal.

وَأَمَّا الْجِسْمُ فَعِنْدَ بَعْضِ الْحُسَّابِ هُوَ مَا لَهُ أَبْعَادٌ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَهُوَ الطُّولُ وَالْعَرْضُ وَالْعُمْقُ ، وَعِنْدَنَا تَرَكُّبُ الْجَوْهَرَيْنِ يَكْفِي لِإِطْلَاقِ اسْمِ الْجِسْمِ عَلَيْهِمَا ، لِأَنَّهُ لَوْ زَادَ الْجَوْهَرُ الْوَاحِدُ عَلَى أَحَدِ الْأَبْعَادِ الثَّلَاثَةِ مِنْ أَحَدِ الْجِسْمَيْنِ صَحَّ أَن يُقَالَ هَذَا أَجْسَمُ مِنْهُ ، وَلَوْلَا أَنَّ أَصْلَ التَّرَكُّبِ يَكْفِي لِإِطْلَاقِ اسْمِ الْجِسْمِ عَلَيْهِمَا لَمَا صَحَّ التَّرْجِيحُ بِكَوْنِهِ أَجْسَمَ مِنْهُ بِزِيَادَةِ بُعْدٍ وَاحِدٍ. فَالْحَدُّ الصَّحِيحُ لِلْجِسْمِ هُوَ الْمُتَرَكِّبَانِ فَصَاعِدًا أَوِ الْمُجْتَمِعَانِ فَصَاعِدًا .

وَأَمَّا الْعَرَضُ فَهُوَ اسْمٌ لِمَا لَا دَوَامَ لَهُ فِي اللُّغَةِ . وَحَدُّهُ مَا يَقُومُ بِغَيْرِهِ وَلَا دَوَامَ لَهُ . وَأَنْوَاعُهُ نَيِّفٌ وَثَلَاثُونَ ، مِثْلُ الْأَلْوَانِ وَالْأَكْوَانِ وَالطُّعُومِ وَالرَّوَائِحِ وَالْأَصْوَاتِ وَالْقُدَرِ وَالْإِرَادَاتِ . وَأَنْكَرَتِ الدَّهْرِيَّةُ وَالثَّنَوِيَّةُ وَبَعْضُ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ كَوْنَ الْأَعْرَاضِ مَعَانِيَ وَرَاءَ الذَّاتِ . وَهَذَا قَوْلٌ فَاسِدٌ بِدَلِيلِ أَنَّ الشَّعْرَ الْأَسْوَدَ إِذَا ابْيَضَّ صَحَّ أَن يُقَالَ هَذَا الشَّعْرُ عَيْنُ ذَلِكَ الشَّعْرِ ، وَالْبَيَاضُ غَيْرُ السَّوَادِ بِالِاتِّفَاقِ . ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لَوْ كَانَ الشَّعْرُ الْأَسْوَدُ أَسْوَدَ لِذَاتِهِ لَمَا تَغَيَّرَ عَنْ حَالِهِ مَعَ قِيَامِ الذَّاتِ الْمُوجِبِ لِلسَّوَادِ ، وَمَتَى صَارَ أَبْيَضَ عُلِمَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ أَسْوَدَ لِمَعْنًى ، حَتَّى تَغَيَّرَ بِتَغَيُّرِ ذَلِكَ الْمَعْنَى .

وَأَمَّا الْقَدِيمُ فَهُوَ مَا لَا ابْتِدَاءَ لِوُجُودِهِ ، وَالْحَادِثُ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ فَكَانَ . إِذَا عَرَفْنَا هَذَا فَنَقُولُ الْأَعْيَانُ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ خُلُوُّهَا عَنِ الْأَعْرَاضِ ، وَهِيَ حَادِثَةٌ ؛

This is because it is impossible for particles to exist except as either combined or separated. Likewise, anything that occupies space, when remaining [for longer than a moment], cannot exist except as still or moving. For stillness is [defined as] two moments of existence in one place, while movement is [defined as] two moments of existence in two places. The temporality of movement is established by the senses and perception, while [the temporality] of stillness is inferred from its ending when movement begins, since what is eternal cannot end.

So if substances cannot possibly be divested of accidents, which are temporal, then substances cannot precede temporal things, since preceding something necessarily entails being divested of it. The evidence that it is impossible for accidents to remain [for longer than a moment] will be discussed in this book in the section on potency, God willing. Anything, then, that cannot precede temporal things is itself necessarily temporal, for, in that case, it is conjoined to what has a beginning. If it is temporal, it is preceded by nonexistence, and that which is preceded by nonexistence cannot exist in and of itself. The possibility of its existence and that of its nonexistence are logically equivalent; hence, there must be a specifying determiner to give preponderance to one possibility over the other. That determiner, in turn, must be necessarily existent; otherwise, it too would need a determiner, and that determiner would need another one, ad infinitum. The only logical option is for it to end at One who is necessarily existent—namely, the Creator (may His majesty be exalted).[20] Once it is established that He is necessarily existent, in and of Himself, it follows that He is eternal, since His existence is not contingent on another besides Him. His existence is thus essential, and His nonexistence is impossible, because His entity [He Himself or "*what* He is"] logically entails His existence ["*that* He is"], eternally without beginning or end.

فَإِنَّ الْجَوَاهِرَ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ وُجُودُهَا إِلَّا مُجْتَمِعَةً أَوْ مُتَفَرِّقَةً ، وَكَذَا الْمُتَمَكِّنُ فِي زَمَانِ الْبَقَاءِ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ إِلَّا سَاكِنًا أَوْ مُتَحَرِّكًا ، فَإِنَّ السُّكُونَ كَوْنَانِ فِي مَكَانٍ وَاحِدٍ ، وَالْحَرَكَةَ كَوْنَانِ فِي مَكَانَيْنِ . وَحُدُوثُ الْحَرَكَةِ ثَابِتٌ بِالْحِسِّ وَالْمُشَاهَدَةِ ، وَحُدُوثُ السُّكُونِ ثَابِتٌ بِدَلَالَةِ انْعِدَامِهِ بِوُجُودِ الْحَرَكَةِ ، إِذِ الْقَدِيمُ لَا يَنْعَدِمُ .

وَإِذَا لَمْ يُتَصَوَّرْ خُلُوُّ الْأَعْيَانِ عَنِ الْأَعْرَاضِ ، وَأَنَّهَا حَادِثَةٌ ، فَلَا يُتَصَوَّرُ سَبْقُهَا عَلَى الْحَوَادِثِ ، لِأَنَّ فِي السَّبْقِ الْخُلُوَّ لَا مَحَالَةَ . وَدَلَالَةُ اسْتِحَالَةِ بَقَاءِ الْأَعْرَاضِ تَأْتِي فِي مَسْأَلَةِ الْإِسْتِطَاعَةِ فِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ ، إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ تَعَالَى . وَكُلُّ مَا لَا يَسْبِقُ الْحَادِثَ فَهُوَ حَادِثٌ ضَرُورَةً ، لِمُشَارَكَتِهِ الْمُحْدَثَ حِينَئِذٍ . وَإِذَا كَانَ حَادِثًا كَانَ مَسْبُوقَ الْعَدَمِ ، وَمَا سَبَقَهُ الْعَدَمُ لَمْ يَكُنْ وُجُودُهُ لِذَاتِهِ . وَيَسْتَوِي فِي الْعَقْلِ إِمْكَانُ وُجُودِهِ وَعَدَمِهِ ، فَلَا بُدَّ مِن مُخَصِّصٍ يُرَجِّحُ أَحَدَ الْجَائِزَيْنِ عَلَى الْآخَرِ ، وَيَجِبُ أَن يَكُونَ الْمُخَصِّصُ وَاجِبَ الْوُجُودِ لَا جَائِزَ الْوُجُودِ ، لِأَنَّهُ لَوْ كَانَ جَائِزَ الْوُجُودِ لَاحْتَاجَ إِلَى مُخَصِّصٍ آخَرَ ، وَذَاكَ إِلَى آخَرَ ، إِلَى أَن يَتَسَلْسَلَ أَوْ يَنْتَهِيَ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ وَاجِبُ الْوُجُودِ ، وَهُوَ الصَّانِعُ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ . وَإِذَا ثَبَتَ أَنَّهُ وَاجِبُ الْوُجُودِ لِذَاتِهِ ثَبَتَ أَنَّهُ قَدِيمٌ ، لِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَتَعَلَّقْ وُجُودُهُ بِغَيْرِهِ ، فَكَانَ وُجُودُهُ لِذَاتِهِ ، فَيَسْتَحِيلُ عَدَمُهُ ، لِوُجُودِ ذَاتِهِ الْمُوجِبِ لِوُجُودِهِ أَزَلًا وَأَبَدًا .

By the sum total of what we have mentioned, it is clear that God, the exalted, cannot be called a particle, body, or accident, since the meanings signified by these words cannot possibly be ascribed to the majesty of God, the exalted. If one imagines he can ascribe these terms to God, yet without intending their meanings, then that is absurd, since using a name for other than its designated meaning is not allowed, unless done metaphorically, the condition of which is that there be some resemblance between the literal and metaphorical. Yet there is no resemblance whatsoever between God and His creation; therefore, these terms cannot be used for God, the exalted, neither literally nor metaphorically. And enablement is by God alone.[21]

ON DIVINE ONENESS

The People of Truth[22] state that God, the exalted, is indeed one without partner. On this point, the dualists, the magians (*al-majūs*), the Christians (*al-Naṣārā*), the naturalists (*al-ṭabā'iʿiyyah*), and the astrologers (*al-aflākiyyah*) differ with them. The dualists and magians claim that the Creator is two [beings], one the creator of good and the other the creator of evil; some of them call them *yazdān* and *ahriman*, others good (*nūr*, lit. light) and evil (*ẓulmah*, lit. darkness).

The Christians claim that He is the third of three, calling them the three hypostases (*uqnūm*, pl. *aqānīm*), which are essence, knowledge, and life. Others think there is a father, who is God; a son, who is Jesus ﷺ; and a wife, who is Mary ﷺ.[23] Exalted beyond glory is God above that.

وَقَدْ عُرِفَ بِمَجْمُوعِ مَا ذَكَرْنَا أَنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ أَن يُسَمَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى جَوْهَرًا وَلَا جِسْمًا وَلَا عَرَضًا ، لِاسْتِحَالَةِ ثُبُوتِ مَعَانِي هَذِهِ الْأَسَامِي فِي حَقِّ اللهِ تَعَالَى . وَمَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّهُ أَطْلَقَ هَذِهِ الْأَسَامِيَ عَلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى لَا لِهَذِهِ الْمَعَانِي فَهُوَ بَاطِلٌ، لِأَنَّ إِطْلَاقَ الْاِسْمِ فِي غَيْرِ مَا وُضِعَ لَهُ اللَّفْظُ لَا يَجُوزُ إِلَّا بِطَرِيقِ الْمَجَازِ ، وَشَرْطُهُ أَن يَكُونَ بَيْنَ مَحَلِّ الْحَقِيقَةِ وَالْمَجَازِ نَوْعُ مُشَابَهَةٍ ، وَلَا مُشَابَهَةَ بَيْنَ اللهِ وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ بِوَجْهٍ مِنَ الْوُجُوهِ ، فَلَا يَجُوزُ إِطْلَاقُ هَذِهِ الْأَسَامِي فِي حَقِّ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، لَا حَقِيقَةً وَلَا مَجَازًا . وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي تَوْحِيدِ الصَّانِعِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى وَاحِدٌ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ . وَخَالَفَهُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ الثَّنَوِيَّةُ وَالْمَجُوسُ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالطَّبَائِعِيَّةُ وَالْأَفْلَاكِيَّةُ . فَزَعَمَتِ الثَّنَوِيَّةُ وَالْمَجُوسُ أَنَّ الصَّانِعَ اثْنَانِ : أَحَدُهُمَا خَالِقُ الْخَيْرِ ، وَالثَّانِي خَالِقُ الشَّرِّ . وَعَبَّرَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَنْهُمَا بِيَزْدَانَ وَأَهْرِمَنَ ، وَبَعْضُهُمْ بِالنُّورِ وَالظُّلْمَةِ .

وَزَعَمَتِ النَّصَارَى أَنَّهُ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ ، وَعَبَّرُوا عَنْهُ بِالْأَقَانِيمِ الثَّلَاثَةِ ، وَهُنَّ ذَاتٌ وَعِلْمٌ وَحَيَاةٌ . وَزَعَمَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَنَّهُ أَبٌ وَهُوَ اللهُ ، وَابْنٌ وَهُوَ عِيسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ، وَزَوْجَةٌ وَهِيَ مَرْيَمُ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهَا ؛ تَعَالَى اللهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا .

The naturalists claim that the Creator is four—namely, heat, coldness, moisture, and dryness. The astrologers claim that He is seven, namely, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, the sun, and the moon.

All of these groups, in reality, deny the Creator—may His majesty be exalted[24]—as indeed, the Creator must be necessarily existent in and of Himself, and this is impossible for other than *one*. For if the Creator were two [beings], then if one of them willed to create life in a particular body and the other willed to create death simultaneously in that same body, then either both wills would be executed or one would be executed in spite of the other, or neither. The execution of both wills [simultaneously] is impossible; the execution of neither would entail that both [beings] are powerless, and the powerless cannot be divine; and if only one [will] were carried out in spite of the other, the one whose will was annulled would be rendered overpowered, and one who is overpowered cannot be divine.

If it is said:[25] If one of them knew that the other desires to create life in a particular body, he would then agree with him and not desire to create death therein, especially based on your theological principle that divine will corresponds to divine knowledge. We respond: This agreement would occur either unwillingly or willingly.

وَزَعَمَتِ الطَّبَائِعِيُّونَ أَنَّ الصَّانِعَ أَرْبَعَةٌ : الْحَرَارَةُ وَالْبُرُودَةُ وَالرُّطُوبَةُ وَالْيُبُوسَةُ . وَزَعَمَتِ الْأَفْلَاكِيَّةُ أَنَّهُ سَبْعَةٌ : زُحَلُ وَالْمُشْتَرِي وَالْمِرِّيخُ وَالزُّهْرَةُ وَعُطَارِدُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ .

وَهَذِهِ الْفِرَقُ كُلُّهَا هُمُ الْمُنْكِرُونَ لِلصَّانِعِ عَلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ ، جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ ، فَإِنَّ الصَّانِعَ لَا بُدَّ وَأَن يَكُونَ وَاجِبَ الْوُجُودِ لِذَاتِهِ ، وَلَا يُتَصَوَّرُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا لِوَاحِدٍ . وَدَلَالَةُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الصَّانِعَ لَوْ كَانَ اثْنَيْنِ ، فَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَحَدُهُمَا خَلْقَ الْحَيَاةِ فِي جِسْمٍ وَأَرَادَ الْآخَرُ خَلْقَ الْمَوْتِ فِي ذَلِكَ الْجِسْمِ فِي زَمَانٍ وَاحِدٍ ، فَلَا يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ تَنْفُذَ إِرَادَتُهُمَا أَوْ تَنْفُذَ إِرَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمَا دُونَ الْآخَرِ أَوْ لَمْ تَنْفُذْ . وَنَفَاذُ إِرَادَتِهِمَا مُحَالٌ ، وَلَوْ لَمْ تَنْفُذْ إِرَادَتُهُمَا كَانَا عَاجِزَيْنِ وَالْعَاجِزُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَهًا ، وَلَوْ نَفَذَتْ إِرَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمَا دُونَ الْآخَرِ صَارَ الَّذِي تَعَطَّلَتْ إِرَادَتُهُ مَقْهُورًا ، وَالْمَقْهُورُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَهًا .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ إِذَا عَلِمَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَنَّ الْآخَرَ يُرِيدُ خَلْقَ الْحَيَاةِ فِي جِسْمٍ ، يُوَافِقُهُ فِي ذَلِكَ وَلَا يُخَالِفُهُ بِإِرَادَةِ الْمَوْتِ فِيهِ ، خُصُوصًا عَلَى أَصْلِكُمْ أَنَّ الْإِرَادَةَ تُلَازِمُ الْعِلْمَ . قُلْنَا هَذِهِ الْمُوَافَقَةُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِمَّا أَنْ تَقَعَ ضَرُورَةً أَوِ اخْتِيَارًا ؛

If you say [it would occur] unwillingly, then each of the two is compelled to agree with his partner, rendering them both powerless.

If you say [it would occur] willingly, then disagreement between them is still logically conceivable, whereby the reductio argument still applies.[26]

Regarding the statement "Divine will corresponds to divine knowledge," we respond that according to us, divine will corresponds to divine action, not divine knowledge, since it is not necessary that a known thing be willed. For example, the entity and attributes of God, the exalted, are known to Him but not willed by Him. Likewise, regarding the nonexistent (*maʿdūm*), He, the exalted, knows how it would exist *were* it to exist, yet that is not willed by Him.

As for the rebuttal against those who believe in good and evil [as dual creators], we note that you concur with us regarding the temporality of evil, so we ask if its temporal occurrence is [caused] by its own essence or by good creating it. If you say it is by its own essence, then you have admitted the occurrence of something without a creator, which entails negation of the Creator, not affirmation of two creators. And, if you say it is by good creating it, then you have admitted that [good] creates the origin of all evil and depravity, which runs contrary to your fundamental premise [of dualism, but is, in effect, our position, that the Creator is one and creates both good and evil].

As for the opinion of Trinitarians, it too is absurd, as there is no evidence whatsoever—neither logical nor scriptural[27]—for their categorization of three hypostases. Moreover, they consider the essence along with knowledge and life as three, so why not add to it power and will to make five, and hearing and sight to make seven, or even more attributes of perfection?

فَإِنْ قُلْتَ ضَرُورَةً ، كَانَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مُضْطَرًّا إِلَى مُوَافَقَةِ صَاحِبِهِ فَيَكُونَانِ عَاجِزَيْنِ ، وَإِنْ قُلْتَ اخْتِيَارًا ، يُمْكِنُ تَقْدِيرُ الْمُخَالَفَةِ بَيْنَهُمَا ، فَيَتَوَجَّهُ التَّقْسِيمُ .

وَقَوْلُهُ إِنَّ الْإِرَادَةَ تُلَازِمُ الْعِلْمَ ، قُلْنَا عِنْدَنَا الْإِرَادَةُ تُلَازِمُ الْفِعْلَ دُونَ الْعِلْمِ ، إِذْ لَيْسَ مِنْ ضَرُورَةِ كَوْنِ الشَّيْءِ مَعْلُومًا أَن يَكُونَ مُرَادًا ؛ فَإِنَّ ذَاتَ اللّٰهِ تَعَالَى وَصِفَاتِهِ مَعْلُومٌ لَهُ وَلَيْسَ بِمُرَادٍ لَهُ ، وَكَذَلِكَ الْمَعْدُومُ مَعْلُومٌ لَهُ تَعَالَى أَنَّهُ لَوْ وُجِدَ كَيْفَ يُوجَدُ ، مَعْلُومٌ لَهُ وَلَيْسَ بِمُرَادٍ لَهُ .

وَأَمَّا الرَّدُّ عَلَى مَن يَقُولُ بِالنُّورِ وَالظُّلْمَةِ ، فَنَقُولُ وَافَقْتُمُونَا عَلَى أَنَّ الظُّلْمَةَ حَادِثَةٌ ، فَنَقُولُ حَدَثَتِ الظُّلْمَةُ بِذَاتِهَا أَمْ بِإِحْدَاثِ النُّورِ إِيَّاهَا ؟ إِنْ قُلْتُمْ بِذَاتِهَا فَقَدْ صَرَّحْتُمْ بِحُدُوثِ شَيْءٍ بِدُونِ صَانِعٍ ، وَفِيهِ تَعْطِيلُ الصَّانِعِ ، لَا إِثْبَاتُ الصَّانِعَيْنِ ؛ وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ بِإِحْدَاثِ النُّورِ إِيَّاهَا فَقَدْ أَقْرَرْتُمْ أَنَّهُ أَحْدَثَ أَصْلَ الشُّرُورِ وَالْقَبَائِحِ ، وَهُوَ خِلَافُ أَصْلِكُمْ .

وَأَمَّا قَوْلُ الْمُثَلِّثَةِ فَبَاطِلٌ أَيْضًا ، لِأَنَّهُ لَا دَلِيلَ عَلَى تَقْسِيمِهِمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَقَانِيمَ ، لَا مِنْ جِهَةِ الْعَقْلِ وَلَا مِنْ جِهَةِ النَّقْلِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّهُمْ جَعَلُوا الذَّاتَ مَعَ الْعِلْمِ وَالْحَيَاةِ ثَلَاثَةً ، فَهَلَّا جَعَلُوهُ مَعَ الْقُدْرَةِ وَالْإِرَادَةِ خَمْسَةً ، وَمَعَ السَّمْعِ وَالْبَصَرِ سَبْعَةً ، إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنْ صِفَاتِ الْكَمَالِ .

And the opinion of those who deem Mary ﷺ a spouse and Jesus ﷺ a son is even more despicable, for it entails affirmation of need and composite parts for God, the exalted, both of which are signs of temporality.

As for the rebuttal against the naturalists, we state that heat, coldness, moisture, and dryness are all accidents, unable to subsist in and of themselves or remain by themselves. In fact, they are regenerated every moment, and their loci are loci of temporal things. So they too are temporal and thus undoubtedly in need of an originator.

As for the rebuttal against the astrologers, we state that even according to them, all of these planetary bodies rotate, revolve in orbits, and constantly change positions and states—such as positions indicating good omens, positions indicating misfortune, solar eclipses, lunar eclipses, planetary combustion, apogee, and perigee. All of these are signs of their being subjugated and under control. The Creator then is only God, the exalted, the one, the overpowering.

ON DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE ABOVE TEMPORAL QUALITIES

To proceed, it is impossible for the Creator of the universe[28] to be a body, a particle, an accident, a possessor of form, in a direction, or in a place. The Jews (*al-Yahūd*), the extreme Shia (*ghulāt al-rawāfiḍ*), the anthropomorphists, and the Karrāmiyyah think He is a body; Hishām b. al-Ḥakam[29] [d. ca. 190/805] would describe Him as having a form. The anthropomorphists and Karrāmiyyah state that He is seated upon the throne, while some of them say He is on top of the throne, without the meaning of being seated, yet affirming the direction of above. The Najjāriyyah state that

وَقَوْلُ مَنْ جَعَلَ مَرْيَمَ صَاحِبَةً وَعِيسَى وَلَدًا أَشْنَعُ ، إِذْ فِيهِ إِثْبَاتُ الْحَاجَةِ وَالتَّجْزِئَةِ لِلّٰهِ تَعَالَى ، وَذَلِكَ مِنْ أَمَارَاتِ الْحُدُوثِ .

وَأَمَّا الرَّدُّ عَلَى الطَّبَائِعِيَّةِ ، فَنَقُولُ الْحَرَارَةُ وَالْبُرُودَةُ وَالرُّطُوبَةُ وَالْيُبُوسَةُ كُلُّهَا أَعْرَاضٌ لَا قِيَامَ لَهَا بِذَاتِهَا وَلَا بَقَاءَ لَهَا فِي نَفْسِهَا ، وَهِيَ تَحْدُثُ سَاعَةً فَسَاعَةً ، وَمَحَالُّهَا مَحَالُّ الْحَوَادِثِ ، فَتَكُونُ أَيْضًا حَادِثَةً ، فَلَا بُدَّ لَهَا مِن مُحْدِثٍ .

وَأَمَّا الرَّدُّ عَلَى الْمُنَجِّمَةِ فَنَقُولُ كُلُّ هَذِهِ الْكَوَاكِبِ دَائِرَةٌ سَائِرَةٌ مُنْتَقِلَةٌ مِن بُرْجٍ إِلَى بُرْجٍ ، مُتَحَوِّلَةٌ مِنْ حَالٍ إِلَى حَالٍ عِنْدَكُمْ ، مِنْ سَعْدٍ وَنَحْسٍ وَكُسُوفٍ وَخُسُوفٍ وَاحْتِرَاقٍ وَأَوْجٍ وَهُبُوطٍ ، وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ أَمَارَاتُ كَوْنِهَا مُسَخَّرَةً مَقْهُورَةً . فَالصَّانِعُ إِذَنْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي تَنْزِيهِ الصَّانِعِ عَنْ سِمَاتِ الْحَدَثِ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ صَانِعَ الْعَالَمِ يَسْتَحِيلُ أَن يَكُونَ جِسْمًا أَوْ جَوْهَرًا أَوْ عَرَضًا أَوْ ذَا صُورَةٍ أَوْ فِي جِهَةٍ أَوْ فِي مَكَانٍ . وَزَعَمَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَغُلَاةُ الرَّوَافِضِ وَالْمُشَبِّهَةُ وَالْكَرَّامِيَّةُ أَنَّهُ جِسْمٌ . وَكَانَ هِشَامُ بْنُ الْحَكَمِ يَصِفُهُ بِالصُّورَةِ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُشَبِّهَةُ وَالْكَرَّامِيَّةُ إِنَّهُ مُتَمَكِّنٌ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ لَا بِمَعْنَى التَّمَكُّنِ وَلَكِن يُثْبِتُونَ جِهَةَ الْفَوْقِ . وَقَالَتِ النَّجَّارِيَّةُ

He is in every place with His entity; the Mu'tazilites state that He is in every place with His knowledge, not with His entity.

All of this is absurd since it entails elements of temporality, and God is absolutely transcendent above that. A body is a composition, and every composition can be separated. It is also of a particular size, which could conceivably be larger or smaller, so for Him to be of that particular measure could not obtain, except by the specification of a determiner [who would impose his will upon God and determine God's physical size; this is logically absurd]. Likewise, forms are manifold, and His having all of them at once is impossible; to specify some, again, would require a determiner.

Similarly, were He seated upon the throne, He would necessarily be either of its particular measure [or] smaller or larger. If He were of its measure or smaller, He would be limited and finite, and finiteness is a quality of temporality. If He were larger than it, then the part [of God] that is parallel to the throne would be the same size [as the throne], which would entail that He be composite and divisible, and divisibility is a quality of temporality. Moreover, [were He seated upon the throne,] He would be finite in the downward direction, such that He could sit upon it, and that which can end in one direction can possibly end in all directions. Finally, since His being free of place and direction is established in eternity—as we and our opponents are in agreement that everything besides God, the exalted, is originated (*muḥdath*)—then, if sitting and directionality were to be affirmed after their negation in eternity,

إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ مَكَانٍ بِالذَّاتِ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ مَكَانٍ بِالْعِلْمِ لَا بِالذَّاتِ .

وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ بَاطِلٌ لِأَنَّ فِيهِ أَمَارَاتِ الْحَدَثِ ، وَاللهُ مُنَزَّهٌ عَنْ ذَلِكَ . فَإِنَّ الْجِسْمَ مُجْتَمِعٌ ، وَكُلُّ مُجْتَمِعٍ يَجُوزُ افْتِرَاقُهُ ؛ وَكَذَا يَكُونُ مُقَدَّرًا بِمِقْدَارٍ يُتَصَوَّرُ أَن يَكُونَ أَكْبَرَ مِنْهُ أَوْ أَصْغَرَ ، فَاخْتِصَاصُهُ بِهَذَا الْقَدْرِ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا بِتَخْصِيصِ مُخَصِّصٍ ؛ وَكَذَا الصُّوَرُ مُخْتَلِفَةٌ ، وَاجْتِمَاعُهُ عَلَى الْكُلِّ مُحَالٌ ، وَتَخْصِيصُ الْبَعْضِ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا بِمُخَصِّصٍ .

وَكَذَا لَوْ كَانَ مُتَمَكِّنًا عَلَى الْعَرْشِ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ إِلَّا أَن يَكُونَ مُقَدَّرًا بِمِقْدَارِهِ أَوْ أَصْغَرَ مِنْهُ أَوْ أَكْبَرَ . فَإِنْ كَانَ مُقَدَّرًا بِمِقْدَارِهِ أَوْ أَصْغَرَ مِنْهُ فَلَا بُدَّ وَأَن يَكُونَ مَحْدُودًا مُتَنَاهِيًا ، وَالتَّنَاهِي مِنْ أَمَارَاتِ الْحَدَثِ ؛ وَإِنْ كَانَ أَكْبَرَ مِنْهُ فَالْقَدْرُ الَّذِي يُوَازِي الْعَرْشَ يَكُونُ مُقَدَّرًا بِمِقْدَارِهِ ، فَلَزِمَ أَن يَكُونَ مُتَجَزِّئًا مُتَبَعِّضًا ، وَالتَّبَعُّضُ مِنْ أَمَارَاتِ الْحَدَثِ . ثُمَّ لَا بُدَّ وَأَن يَكُونَ مُتَنَاهِيًا مِنْ جِهَةِ السِّفْلِ ، حَتَّى يَكُونَ مُتَمَكِّنًا عَلَيْهِ ، وَمَا جَازَ عَلَيْهِ التَّنَاهِي مِنْ جِهَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ جَازَ مِنْ سَائِرِ الْجِهَاتِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ التَّعَرِّيَ عَنِ الْمَكَانِ وَالْجِهَةِ لَمَّا كَانَ ثَابِتًا فِي الْأَزَلِ ، لِإِجْمَاعٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْخُصُومِ عَلَى أَنَّ مَا سِوَى اللهِ تَعَالَى مُحْدَثٌ ، فَلَوْ ثَبَتَ التَّمَكُّنُ وَالْجِهَةُ بَعْدَ أَن لَمْ يَكُنْ ثَابِتًا

there would have occurred in His entity a meaning that was not eternally His, rendering Him a locus for temporal things, which is impossible.

Regarding His statement, exalted be He, "The All-Merciful has assumed the throne" (20:5), there is more than one possible meaning, for "to assume" (*istiwā'*) can be used to mean "to assume authority over" (*istīlā'*) or "to seek out" (*qaṣd*) or "to be completed" (*tamām*) or "to [physically] sit and be firm in" (*istiqrār wa tamakkun*). So, in light of these possibilities, the verse cannot be a definitive proof for our opponent. And, in any case, the stronger possibility is in our favor, due to what we have stated, for verily, God, the exalted, praises Himself in the verse, and [even] if the mention of "assumption" had been a praise with respect to creation, the meaning of "sitting and being firm" would not be understood thereby, as the poet said:

> *Bishr has assumed [control] over Iraq*
> *Without a sword or spilled blood.*

That is, praise is that which distinguishes its subject from those who neither approach him nor equal him; but if "assumption" [of the throne] meant "sitting," then every low and vile person would be equivalent in that meaning, rendering it void of much praise.

The opinion of those who claim He is present everywhere with His very entity is even more unfounded, as it is impossible for something that occupies space to be in two places simultaneously; so how is it possible for the One for whom placement itself is impossible to [literally] be in all places? The opinion that He is everywhere with His knowledge but not with His entity is also false, since it is incorrect to say about one who knows a place that "he is in that place with his knowledge."

فِي الْأَزَلِ، لَحَدَثَ فِي ذَاتِهِ مَعْنًى لَم يَكُن لَهُ فِي الْأَزَلِ، فَيَصِيرُ ذَاتُهُ مَحَلًّا لِلْحَوَادِثِ وَإِنَّهُ مُحَالٌ.

وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱسْتَوَىٰ ﴾ مُحْتَمِلٌ، فَإِنَّ الْاِسْتِوَاءَ يُذْكَرُ وَيُرَادُ بِهِ الْاِسْتِيلَاءُ، وَيُذْكَرُ وَيُرَادُ بِهِ الْقَصْدُ، وَيُذْكَرُ وَيُرَادُ بِهِ التَّمَامُ، وَيُذْكَرُ وَيُرَادُ بِهِ الْاِسْتِقْرَارُ وَالتَّمَكُّنُ، فَلَا يَكُونُ لِلْخَصْمِ فِيهِ حُجَّةٌ مَعَ الْاِحْتِمَالِ؛ مَعَ أَنَّ التَّرْجِيحَ مَعَنَا لِمَا قُلْنَا، فَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى تَمَدَّحَ بِهِ، وَلَوْ كَانَ ذِكْرُ الْاِسْتِوَاءِ لِلْمَدْحِ فِي حَقِّ الْخَلْقِ لَا يُفْهَمُ مِنْهُ التَّمَكُّنُ وَالْاِسْتِقْرَارُ، كَمَا فِي قَوْلِ الشَّاعِرِ:

قَدِ اسْتَوَى بِشْرٌ عَلَى الْعِرَاقِ مِنْ غَيْرِ سَيْفٍ وَدَمٍ مُهْرَاقِ

وَتَحْقِيقُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ التَّمَدُّحَ مِمَّا يَمْتَازُ بِهِ عَمَّن لَا يُدَانِيهِ وَلَا يُسَاوِيهِ، وَإِذَا كَانَ الْاِسْتِوَاءُ بِمَعْنَى التَّمَكُّنِ يُسَاوِي فِيهِ كُلُّ دَنِيٍّ وَحَقِيرٍ، فَلَا يَكُونُ فِيهِ كَثِيرُ مَدْحٍ.

وَقَوْلُ مَنْ قَالَ إِنَّهُ فِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ بِالذَّاتِ أَفْسَدُ، لِأَنَّ الْمُتَمَكِّنَ يَسْتَحِيلُ أَن يَكُونَ فِي مَكَانَيْنِ فِي زَمَانٍ وَاحِدٍ، فَمَنِ اسْتَحَالَ عَلَيْهِ التَّمَكُّنُ كَيْفَ يُتَصَوَّرُ أَن يَكُونَ فِي الْأَمَاكِنِ كُلِّهَا. وَكَذَا قَوْلُ مَنْ قَالَ إِنَّهُ فِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ بِالْعِلْمِ لَا بِذَاتِهِ بَاطِلٌ أَيْضًا، لِأَنَّ مَن يَعْلَمُ مَكَانًا لَا يَصِحُّ أَن يُقَالَ هُوَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْمَكَانِ بِالْعِلْمِ.

The opinion of directionality is absurd as well, since it is impossible for Him to be in all directions, and specification of some directions would necessitate a determiner [besides Him]. Also, if one is in a direction in relation to something else, there must necessarily be a particular physical distance between the two, and that distance could conceivably be longer or shorter; so there must be a determiner for that particular distance, as other distances are equally possible. Moreover, there is no praise in aboveness in terms of physical direction, since a watchguard is physically above the sultan, yet the sultan is above him in power and authority; that is what is meant by the Exalted's statement "And He is the One who dominates over His servants" (6:18). As for raising the hands toward the heavens during supplication, it is purely devotional, nothing else, like placing the forehead on the ground in prostration and like facing the Kaʿbah in ritual prayer.[30]

The corporealists (*al-mujassimah*) and the anthropomorphists use many ambiguous verses and hadith whose apparent, outward meaning they hold to firmly. Sunni orthodoxy employs two methods of understanding [these texts]. The first is to accept them, believe in them, and consign their meaning over to God, the exalted, while affirming His utter transcendence above that which does not befit His entity [namely, temporality, corporeality, or resemblance to creation]; this is the method of our pious predecessors (*salaf*) ﵃. The second is to accept them and investigate their meaning in a manner both befitting God's entity and corresponding to linguistic usage yet without being certain that that is the intent of God, the exalted; this is the method of later Muslim scholars (*khalaf*). The method of the early Muslims is safer (*aslam*), while that of the later Muslims is more precise (*aḥkam*). And God alone is the One who enables.[31]

وَكَذَا الْقَوْلُ بِالْجِهَةِ بَاطِلٌ أَيْضًا ، لِأَنَّ وُجُودَهُ فِي سَائِرِ الْجِهَاتِ مُحَالٌ ، وَتَخْصِيصُ بَعْضِ الْجِهَاتِ لَا بُدَّ لَهُ مِن مُخَصِّصٍ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ مَنْ كَانَ بِجِهَةٍ مِنَ الشَّيْءِ لَا بُدَّ وَأَن يَكُونَ بَيْنَهُمَا مَسَافَةٌ مُقَدَّرَةٌ يُتَصَوَّرُ أَنْ تَكُونَ أَزْيَدَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَوْ أَنْقَصَ ، فَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ مُخَصِّصٍ لِذَلِكَ الْقَدْرِ مَعَ مُسَاوَاةِ غَيْرِهِ إِيَّاهُ فِي الْجَوَازِ ؛ ثُمَّ لَا تَمَدُّحَ فِي الْفَوْقِيَّةِ مِنْ حَيْثُ الْجِهَةُ ، إِذِ الْحَارِسُ فَوْقَ السُّلْطَانِ مِنْ حَيْثُ الصُّورَةُ وَالسُّلْطَانُ فَوْقَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ الْقَهْرُ وَالْوَلَايَةُ ، وَهُوَ الْمُرَادُ مِنْ قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَهُوَ ٱلْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِۦۚ ﴾ . وَأَمَّا رَفْعُ الْأَيْدِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فِي وَقْتِ الدُّعَاءِ فَتَعَبُّدٌ مَحْضٌ ، كَوَضْعِ الْجَبْهَةِ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ فِي السُّجُودِ ، وَالْاِسْتِقْبَالِ إِلَى الْكَعْبَةِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ .

وَلِلْمُجَسِّمَةِ وَالْمُشَبِّهَةِ آيَاتٌ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ وَأَخْبَارٌ يَتَمَسَّكُونَ بِظَوَاهِرِهَا . وَلِأَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ فِيهَا طَرِيقَانِ : أَحَدُهُمَا قَبُولُهَا وَتَصْدِيقُهَا وَتَفْوِيضُ تَأْوِيلِهَا إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى ، مَعَ تَنْزِيهِهِ عَمَّا لَا يَلِيقُ بِذَاتِهِ ، وَهُوَ طَرِيقُ سَلَفِنَا الصَّالِحِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ ؛ وَالثَّانِي قَبُولُهَا وَالْبَحْثُ عَنْ تَأْوِيلِهَا عَلَى وَجْهٍ يَلِيقُ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، مُوَافِقًا لِاسْتِعْمَالِ أَهْلِ اللِّسَانِ ، مِنْ غَيْرِ قَطْعٍ بِكَوْنِهِ مُرَادَ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَهُوَ طَرِيقُ الخَلَفِ .

فَطَرِيقُ السَّلَفِ أَسْلَمُ وَطَرِيقُ الْخَلَفِ أَحْكَمُ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, THE EXALTED

Sunni orthodoxy maintains that to God, the exalted, are ascribed attributes of perfection and that God is utterly transcendent above deficiency or loss. His attributes are not accidents that enter into and leave existence; rather, they are without beginning, without end, eternal, ascribed to His entity, and of no resemblance whatsoever to attributes of creation. Hence, He is living, knowing, powerful, hearing, seeing, choosing, and speaking, ad infinitum of attributes of perfection; and He possesses life, knowledge, power, hearing, sight, will, and speech.

The esoterists (*al-bāṭiniyyah*) and the philosophers (*al-falāsifah*) deny that God is living, knowing, and powerful in a literal sense; they claim that God, the exalted, cannot be described with that by which creation is described. The Mu'tazilites admit the description of God as living, knowing, powerful, hearing, seeing, choosing, and speaking. However, they deny the existence of these attributes and their being ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, except with regard to speech, will, and action—which they [affirm as existent but] claim are temporal and not ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted.[32]

The Ashʿarī scholars classify the divine attributes into two categories: attributes of entity (*ṣifāt dhāt*) and attributes of action (*ṣifāt fiʿl*). They maintain that attributes of entity are eternal and ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, while attributes of action are temporal and not ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted. This will be further elucidated in the section on "The Act of Creating (*takwīn*) and the Created (*mukawwan*)," if God, the exalted, wills.

الْقَوْلُ فِي صِفَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى مَوْصُوفٌ بِصِفَاتِ الْكَمَالِ ، مُنَزَّهٌ عَنِ النَّقِيصَةِ وَالزَّوَالِ . وَصِفَاتُهُ لَيْسَتْ بِأَعْرَاضٍ تَحْدُثُ وَتَنْعَدِمُ ، بَلْ هِيَ أَزَلِيَّةٌ أَبَدِيَّةٌ قَدِيمَةٌ قَائِمَةٌ بِذَاتِهِ ، لَا تُشْبِهُ صِفَاتِ الْخَلْقِ بِوَجْهٍ مِنَ الْوُجُوهِ . فَهُوَ حَيٌّ عَالِمٌ قَادِرٌ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ مُرِيدٌ مُتَكَلِّمٌ إِلَى مَا لَا يَتَنَاهَى مِنْ صِفَاتِ الْكَمَالِ ، وَلَهُ حَيَاةٌ وَعِلْمٌ وَقُدْرَةٌ وَسَمْعٌ وَبَصَرٌ وَإِرَادَةٌ وَكَلَامٌ .

وَأَنْكَرَتِ الْبَاطِنِيَّةُ وَالْفَلَاسِفَةُ كَوْنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى حَيًّا عَالِمًا قَادِرًا عَلَى التَّحْقِيقِ ، وَزَعَمَتْ أَنَّ مَا يُوصَفُ بِهِ الْخَلْقُ لَا يُوصَفُ بِهِ اللهُ تَعَالَى . وَاعْتَرَفَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ بِاتِّصَافِ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِأَنَّهُ حَيٌّ عَالِمٌ قَادِرٌ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ مُرِيدٌ مُتَكَلِّمٌ ، ولَكِنْ أَنْكَرَتْ وُجودَ هَذِهِ الصِّفَاتِ وَقِيَامَهَا بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، إِلَّا فِي الْكَلَامِ والْإِرَادَةِ وَالْفِعْلِ ، فَزَعَمَتْ أَنَّهَا حَادِثَةٌ غَيْرُ قَائِمَةٍ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى .

وَقَسَّمَتِ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةُ الصِّفَاتِ عَلَى قِسْمَيْنِ : صِفَاتُ ذَاتٍ وَصِفَاتُ فِعْلٍ ، وَزَعَمَتْ أَنَّ صِفَاتِ الذَّاتِ قَدِيمَةٌ قَائِمَةٌ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَصِفَاتِ الْفِعْلِ حَادِثَةٌ غَيْرُ قَائِمَةٍ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى . وَبَيَانُ ذَلِكَ يَأْتِي فِي مَسْأَلَةِ « التَّكْوِينِ وَالْمُكَوَّنِ » إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ تَعَالَى .

The proof that our position is correct is how God, the exalted, praises Himself in His Book and how He allows His servants to know Him by His beautiful names, as He—may His majesty be exalted—says, "He is the living; there is no deity besides Him" (40:65); and He—may His remembrance be magnified—says, "And He is all-knowing, all-wise" (66:2); and He says, "And He has power over all things" (5:120); and He says, "Yet He is all-hearing, all-seeing" (42:11); and He—and what a mighty speaker—says, "He is God, the creator, the originator, the fashioner" (59:24); among many other verses.

We state that God, the exalted, has described Himself as living, knowing, and powerful in a literal sense, and according to specialists of linguistics, these nouns [in Arabic, though they are adjectives in English] are derived from roots with particular meanings. So, if these nouns are used to describe an entity, what is intended is the affirmation of the root of their derivation, not merely naming the entity.[33] So were life, knowledge, and power not ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, the usage of these nouns for Him would be merely for the sake of giving proper names and titles, not for the sake of literal meaning; this is not valid.

وَدَلَالَةُ صِحَّةِ مَا قُلْنَا مَا تَمَدَّحَ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَتَعَرَّفَ بِهِ إِلَى عِبَادِهِ بِأَسْمَائِهِ الْحُسْنَى ، فَقَالَ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ ﴿ هُوَ ٱلْحَيُّ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ﴾ ، وَقَالَ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ ﴿ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴾ ، وَقَالَ ﴿ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾ ، وَقَالَ ﴿ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴾ ، وَقَالَ عَزَّ مِنْ قَائِلٍ ﴿ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْخَٰلِقُ ٱلْبَارِئُ ٱلْمُصَوِّرُ ﴾ إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ .

فَنَقُولُ لَمَّا اتَّصَفَ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِكَوْنِهِ حَيًّا عَالِمًا قَادِرًا عَلَى التَّحْقِيقِ ، وَهَذِهِ أَسْمَاءٌ مُشْتَقَّةٌ مِن مَعَانٍ مَخْصُوصَةٍ عِنْدَ أَرْبَابِ اللِّسَانِ ، فَإِذَا أُطْلِقَتْ هَذِهِ الْأَسَامِي عَلَى ذَاتٍ ، يُرَادُ بِهَا إِثْبَاتُ مَأْخَذِ الْإِشْتِقَاقِ ، لَا مُجَرَّدُ تَعْرِيفِ الذَّاتِ . فَلَوْ لَمْ تَكُنِ الْحَيَاةُ وَالْعِلْمُ وَالْقُدْرَةُ قَائِمَةً بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَكَانَ إِطْلَاقُ هَذِهِ الْأَسَامِي عَلَيْهِ بِطَرِيقِ اللَّقَبِ وَالْعَلَمِ ، لَا بِطَرِيقِ الْحَقِيقَةِ ، وَهَذَا لَا يَجُوزُ .

If it is said: If we affirm these meanings in addition to the entity, then we are postulating the view of multiple coeternals, which contradicts divine oneness. We respond: Once we have proven that the usage of derived nouns to literally describe the divine entity necessitates the ascription of their meanings to His entity, then, by necessity, those meanings must be ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, in light of those [ascribed] nouns. The view of multiple coeternals results only if these meanings were separable from the entity, which we absolutely deny; so if one puts that forth, he must provide evidence.

We further explain this by stating that the attributes of God, the exalted, are neither His very entity, as the Muʿtazilites think, nor other than (*ghayr*) His entity [that is, separable from it], as the Karrāmiyyah believe. Rather, we maintain that every divine attribute is neither His very entity nor separable from it, just as with respect to each attribute in relation to every other attribute being neither identical nor separable. This is because the definition of two things that are separable (*ghayr*) is two things that exist such that it is possible for one to exist without the other; this understanding is impossible with respect to God's attributes in relation to His entity, as well as each divine attribute in relation to the other attributes. So none of them are separable, like the number one in relation to ten. This differs from temporal attributes, as any entity can possibly exist without its particular attributes, rendering them separable from their entity.[34]

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ أَثْبَتْنَا هَذِهِ الْمَعَانِيَ وَرَاءَ الذَّاتِ لَزِمَنَا الْقَوْلُ بِالْقُدَمَاءِ ، وَإِنَّهُ مُنَافٍ لِلتَّوْحِيدِ . قُلْنَا مَهْمَا دَلَلْنَا عَلَى أَنَّ إِطْلَاقَ الْأَسَامِي الْمُشْتَقَّةِ عَلَى الذَّاتِ بِطَرِيقِ الْحَقِيقَةِ يَقْتَضِي قِيَامَ هَذِهِ الْمَعَانِي بِالذَّاتِ وَجَبَ الْقَوْلُ بِقِيَامِهَا بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، نَظَرًا إِلَى هَذِهِ الْأَسَامِي . وَالْقَوْلُ بِالْقُدَمَاءِ إِنَّمَا يَلْزَمُ لَوْ كَانَتْ هَذِهِ الْمَعَانِي أَغْيَارًا لِلذَّاتِ ، وَنَحْنُ نُنْكِرُ ذَلِكَ ، فَمَنِ ادَّعَاهُ فَعَلَيْهِ الْبَيَانُ .

ثُمَّ نَتَبَرَّعُ بِبَيَانِ ذَلِكَ فَنَقُولُ صِفَاتُ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَيْسَتْ عَيْنَ الذَّاتِ كَمَا زَعَمَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ ، وَلَيْسَتْ غَيْرَ الذَّاتِ كَمَا ذَهَبَتْ إِلَيْهِ الْكَرَّامِيَّةُ . بَلْ نَقُولُ كُلُّ صِفَةٍ مِنْ صِفَاتِهِ لَا هِيَ عَيْنُ الذَّاتِ وَلَا غَيْرُ الذَّاتِ ، وَكَذَا كُلُّ صِفَةٍ مَعَ صِفَةٍ أُخْرَى لَا هِيَ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا غَيْرُهَا ، لِأَنَّ حَدَّ الْغَيْرَيْنِ مَوْجُودَانِ يُتَصَوَّرُ وُجُودُ أَحَدِهِمَا مَعَ عَدَمِ الْآخَرِ ، وَذَا لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ فِي صِفَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى مَعَ ذَاتِهِ ، وَلَا فِي كُلِّ صِفَةٍ مَعَ صِفَةٍ أُخْرَى ، فَلَا يَكُونَانِ مُتَغَايِرَيْنِ ، كَالْوَاحِدِ مَعَ الْعَشَرَةِ ؛ بِخِلَافِ الصِّفَاتِ الْمُحْدَثَةِ ، فَإِنَّ قِيَامَ الذَّاتِ بِدُونِ تِلْكَ الصِّفَاتِ الْمُعَيَّنَةِ مُتَصَوَّرٌ فَتَكُونُ غَيْرَ الذَّاتِ .

Furthermore, according to us yet contrary to the Muʿtazilites, it is possible for God, the exalted, to have attributes that we do not know of in detail; the same applies to God's names, due to the Prophet's statement "I am the most knowledgeable of God among you, and the most fearful in awe of God among you,"[35] as well as his statement "I ask You by every name of Yours, that You have given Yourself or sent down in Your Book or taught anyone of Your creation or have preferred for Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen."[36] Despite this, however, because we know God as possessing attributes of perfection in a general sense, we do know Him as is His right to be known.

It is not valid to say that His attributes occupy His entity (*ḥallat bi dhātihi*), nor that His entity is a locus for His attributes (*maḥall li ṣifātihi*), as having location implies movement, and movement with respect to His attributes is impossible. Such phrases are used symbolically and metaphorically for attributes of creation but cannot be used as such with respect to God, the exalted; rather, what can be said is "His attributes are eternal and ascribed to His entity (*qadīmah qā'imah bi dhātihi*)." The Ashʿarī scholars state that His attributes are existent and [eternally] ascribed to His entity (*mawjūdah bi dhātihi*). It cannot be said that His attributes are with Him (*maʿahu*) or next to Him (*mujāwirah lahu*) or in Him (*fīhi*). Out of precaution, some of our fellow Māturīdī scholars avoided saying, "He is all-knowing by His knowledge," lest one misconstrue His knowledge to be a tool; rather, they said, "He is all-knowing, and He has knowledge, and it is eternally ascribed to Him." And by God alone is enablement.

وَيَجُوزُ أَن يَكُونَ لِلّٰهِ تَعَالَى صِفَاتٌ لَا نَعْرِفُهَا عَلَى التَّفْصِيلِ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ ، وَكَذَا فِي الْأَسْمَاءِ لِقَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « أَنَا أَعْلَمُكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ وَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلّٰهِ » ، وَكَذَا قَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ أَوِ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ » . وَلَكِن مَعَ هَذَا لَمَّا عَرَفْنَا اللّٰهَ بِالْإِجْمَالِ أَنَّهُ مَوْصُوفٌ بِصِفَاتِ الْكَمَالِ فَقَدْ عَرَفْنَاهُ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِهِ .

وَلَا يَصِحُّ أَن يُقَالَ صِفَاتُهُ حَلَّتْ بِذَاتِهِ وَلَا أَنَّ ذَاتَهُ مَحَلٌّ لِصِفَاتِهِ ، لِأَنَّ الْحُلُولَ انْتِقَالٌ وَالْإِنْتِقَالُ فِي صِفَاتِهِ مُحَالٌ . وَلَكِن يُسْتَعْمَلُ ذَلِكَ فِي صِفَاتِ الْخَلْقِ عَلَى سَبِيلِ التَّوَسُّعِ وَالْمَجَازِ ، وَلَا يَجُوزُ اسْتِعْمَالُهُ فِي حَقِّ اللّٰهِ تَعَالَى ، وَلَكِن يُقَالُ صِفَاتُهُ قَدِيمَةٌ قَائِمَةٌ بِذَاتِهِ . وَقَالَتِ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةُ صِفَاتُهُ مَوْجُودَةٌ بِذَاتِهِ . وَلَا يُقَالُ صِفَاتُهُ مَعَهُ أَوْ مُجَاوِرَةٌ لَهُ أَوْ فِيهِ . وَاحْتَرَزَ بَعْضُ أَصْحَابِنَا رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ عَالِمٌ بِالْعِلْمِ ، كَيْلَا يُتَوَهَّمَ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ آلَةٌ لَهُ ، وَلَكِنْ قَالُوا إِنَّهُ عَالِمٌ وَلَهُ عِلْمٌ وَهُوَ مَوْصُوفٌ بِهِ فِي الْأَزَلِ . وَبِاللّٰهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

ON THE NAME AND THE NAMED

Sunni orthodoxy—may God grant them victory—maintains that the name and the named are one. The Jahmiyyah, Karrāmiyyah, and Muʿtazilites state that the name differs from the named. Some Ashʿarī scholars state that the name differs from both naming and the named, while others among them state that there are three types of names: the first is the same as the named, the second is other than the named, and the third is neither the named nor other than it. They are in agreement, however, that naming (*tasmiyah*) is other than the named, [naming] being an attribute of the one who names.[37]

The correct position (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is ours since one who says "God" can be accurately described as having remembered God as well as having remembered the name of God; had the name and the named differed, such a description would not be correct. The Exalted's words "So glorify the name of your Lord, the great" (56:96) clearly indicate this.[38] We also say while bowing, "Glorified is my Lord, the great." Eminent linguists also customarily spoke this way, such as the statement of one of their poets [Labīd, counseling his two daughters on how to mourn after his death]:

> *For a year [weep over my death]; then, the name of peace be upon you both;*
> *Whoever weeps for an entire year is absolved of any blame or guilt.*

What is meant is "*peace* be upon you both."

Likewise, if a man says, "Zaynab is divorced" and his wife's name is Zaynab, the divorce counts against the woman herself, not just her name.[39] However, a name can be used to mean the act of naming (*tasmiyah*), and if it is used as such, then it surely differs from the named, as [for instance,] if it is said,

الْقَوْلُ فِي الْاِسْمِ وَالْمُسَمَّى

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ ، نَصَرَهُمُ اللهُ ، الْاِسْمُ وَالْمُسَمَّى وَاحِدٌ . وَقَالَتِ الْجَهْمِيَّةُ وَالْكَرَّامِيَّةُ وَالْمُعْتَزِلَةُ إِنَّ الْاِسْمَ غَيْرُ الْمُسَمَّى . وَقَالَ بَعْضُ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةِ الْاِسْمُ غَيْرُ التَّسْمِيَةِ وَغَيْرُ الْمُسَمَّى . وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمُ الْاِسْمُ يَنْقَسِمُ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَقْسَامٍ : أَحَدُهَا عَيْنُ الْمُسَمَّى ، وَالثَّانِي غَيْرُ الْمُسَمَّى ، وَالثَّالِثُ لَا هُوَ وَلَا غَيْرُهُ . وَاتَّفَقُوا عَلَى أَنَّ التَّسْمِيَةَ غَيْرُ الْمُسَمَّى وَهِيَ مَا قَامَتْ بِالْمُسَمَّى .

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا قُلْنَا ، فَإِنَّ مَنْ قَالَ - الله - ، صَحَّ أَن يُقَالَ ذَكَرَ اللهَ ، وَصَحَّ أَيْضًا أَن يُقَالَ ذَكَرَ اسْمَ اللهِ ، وَلَوْلَا أَنَّ الْاِسْمَ وَالْمُسَمَّى وَاحِدٌ لَمَا صَحَّ إِطْلَاقُ ذَلِكَ . دَلَّ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ فَسَبِّحْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴾ ، وَكَذَا نَقُولُ فِي الرُّكُوعِ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ ، وَكَذَا تَعَارَفَ أَرْبَابُ اللِّسَانِ حَتَّى قَالَ شَاعِرُهُمْ :

إِلَى الْحَوْلِ ثُمَّ اسْمُ السَّلَامِ عَلَيْكُمَا   وَمَنْ يَبْكِ حَوْلًا كَامِلًا فَقَدِ اعْتَذَرْ

وَالْمُرَادُ مِنْهُ ثُمَّ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمَا .

وَكَذَا إِذَا قَالَ الرَّجُلُ زَيْنَبُ طَالِقٌ ، وَاسْمُ امْرَأَتِهِ زَيْنَبُ ، يَقَعُ الطَّلَاقُ عَلَى ذَاتِ الْمَرْأَةِ لَا عَلَى اسْمِهَا . إِلَّا أَنَّ الْاِسْمَ يُذْكَرُ وَيُرَادُ بِهِ التَّسْمِيَةُ ، فَإِذَا اسْتُعْمِلَ الْاِسْمُ بِمَعْنَى التَّسْمِيَةِ يَكُونُ غَيْرَ الْمُسَمَّى لَا مَحَالَةَ ، كَمَا يُقَالُ

"What is your name?" and you answer, "Muḥammad." [The questioner] intends thereby to ask regarding the act of naming, as indicated by his usage of the word "What," which [in Arabic] is used for inanimate things. But if [a name] is used with the word "Who," as in "Who is Muḥammad?" and you say, "I am," you ascribe it [the name] to the entity [the one named]. You do not say, "Indeed, Muḥammad is my name." So that proves our position is correct. And God alone is the One who enables.

ON DIVINE UNIQUENESS AND DISSIMILARITY FROM CREATION

We have established the attributes of perfection for God, the exalted, as a rebuttal to those who deny them (*muʿaṭṭilah*), so now likeness and resemblance must also be negated as a rebuttal to the anthropomorphists, whereby the upright way and straight path are elucidated. Both extremes are contemptible, while "the best of matters are those that are moderate and balanced."[40] The evidence of this position is the Exalted's statement "There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him, yet He is all-hearing, all-seeing" (42:11). He negates resemblance with His words "There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him," yet affirms attributes with His words "yet He is all-hearing, all-seeing."

There is a difference of opinion regarding what constitutes resemblance. The philosophers, esoterists, and Jahm b. Ṣafwān[41] [d. 128/745] state that resemblance [between two things] is entailed in the predication [upon each] of merely the same description or name, to the extent that they refuse to ascribe to God, the exalted, the names Existent (*mawjūd*), Thing (*shay'*),[42] Living (*ḥayy*), Knowing (*ʿālim*), and Able (*qādir*), so as to negate *any* likeness between God, the exalted, and His creation. This, of course, is absurd. If resemblance is entailed by [sharing] the [most] general quality, linguistic categories would be rendered null,

مَا اسْمُكَ ؟ فَتَقُولُ مُحَمَّدٌ ، يُرِيدُ بِهِ السُّؤَالَ عَنِ التَّسْمِيَةِ ، بِدَلِيلِ أَنَّهُ ذَكَرَهُ بِكَلِمَةِ « مَا » وَإِنَّهَا لِغَيْرِ الْعُقَلَاءِ . ثُمَّ إِذَا اسْتُعْمِلَ بِكَلِمَةِ « مَنْ » ، فَيُقَالُ مَن مُحَمَّدٌ ؟ فَتَقُولُ أَنَا ، تُضِيفُهُ إِلَى الذَّاتِ ، وَلَا تَقُولُ إِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا اسْمِي . فَدَلَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى صِحَّةِ مَا قُلْنَا . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

القَوْلُ فِي نَفْيِ التَّشْبِيهِ وَالْمُمَاثَلَةِ

قَدْ أَثْبَتْنَا صِفَاتِ الْكَمَالِ لِلهِ تَعَالَى رَدًّا عَلَى الْمُعَطِّلَةِ ، فَلَا بُدَّ مِن نَفْيِ التَّشْبِيهِ وَالْمُمَاثَلَةِ رَدًّا عَلَى الْمُشَبِّهَةِ ، لِيَتَّضِحَ الْمَنْهَجُ الْقَوِيمُ وَالصِّرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ ، فَكِلَا طَرَفَيِ الْأَمْرِ ذَمِيمٌ ، وَخَيْرُ الْأُمُورِ أَوْسَاطُهَا . وَدَلَالَةُ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَيْءٌۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴾ ؛ نَفَى الْمُمَاثَلَةَ بِقَوْلِهِ ﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَيْءٌۖ ﴾ ، وَدَلَّ عَلَى ثُبُوتِ الصِّفَاتِ بِقَوْلِهِ ﴿ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴾ .

وَاخْتَلَفَ الْقَائِلُونَ فِيمَا تَثْبُتُ بِهِ الْمُمَاثَلَةُ . قَالَتِ الْفَلَاسِفَةُ وَالْبَاطِنِيَّةُ وَجَهْمُ بْنُ صَفْوَانَ الْمُمَاثَلَةُ تَثْبُتُ بِالْاِشْتِرَاكِ فِي مُجَرَّدِ الْوَصْفِ وَالتَّسْمِيَةِ ، حَتَّى امْتَنَعُوا عَنْ تَسْمِيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى مَوْجُودًا وشَيْئًا وَحَيًّا وَعَالِمًا وَقَادِرًا نَفْيًا لِلْمُمَاثَلَةِ بَيْنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ . وَهَذَا بَاطِلٌ ، فَإِنَّ الْمُمَاثَلَةَ لَوْ ثَبَتَ بِالْوَصْفِ الْعَامِّ لَبَطَلَ تَقْسِيمُ أَرْبَابِ اللِّسَانِ بَيْنَ الْأَشْيَاءِ ،

such as classifying something as opposite, as contradictory, as a genus, or as similar. In fact, all things would share resemblance [given that all are described as "existent"], even incapacity with power, stillness with movement, and honey [that is, antidote] with poison. Those who possess intellect consider this meaningless.[43]

The Mu'tazilites state that resemblance [between two things] is entailed by [their] sharing the most specific of qualities: [for example,] our knowledge has three qualities—it is existent, it is an accident, and it is [specifically] knowledge. "Existence" is the most general of its qualities, "being an accident" its middle one, and "being knowledge" its most specific. Therefore [according to them], knowledge resembles knowledge *in its being knowledge*, not in its existence or in its being an accident. Hence, they reject ascribing knowledge to God, the exalted, so as to negate likeness between Him and His creation. But this position also is illogical, for indeed one person's ability by which he can carry ten loads is similar in its most specific quality to another's ability by which he can carry a hundred loads, yet despite that, the two bear no resemblance.

According to us, resemblance is entailed only by sharing all qualities [under consideration], such that if two attributes differ in even one [relevant] quality, they do not have "resemblance."[44] For example, human knowledge is existent, is an accident, is knowledge, is originated, is logically possible, and is replicated [by God] every moment. But when we affirm knowledge as an attribute of God, the exalted, [what we affirm as real] is existent, an attribute, knowledge, eternal, logically necessary, and perpetual from anterior eternity to posterior eternity [that is, atemporal and timeless]; hence, it does not resemble knowledge possessed by creation in any real way whatsoever [due to the categorical difference between what is necessary/eternal and what is possible/temporal].

مِنْ تَسْمِيَتِهِمْ لِبَعْضِ الْأَشْيَاءِ ضِدًّا وَلِبَعْضِهَا خِلَافًا وَلِبَعْضِهَا جِنْسًا وَلِبَعْضِهَا مِثْلًا ، بَلْ كَانَتِ الْأَشْيَاءُ كُلُّهَا مُمَاثِلَةً ، حَتَّى كَانَ الْعَجْزُ مِثْلًا لِلْقُدْرَةِ ، وَالسُّكُونُ مِثْلًا لِلْحَرَكَةِ ، وَالشَّهْدُ مِثْلًا لِلسُّمِّ ، وَهَذَا مِمَّا يُحِيلُهُ الْعُقَلَاءُ .

وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْمُمَاثَلَةُ تَثْبُتُ بِالِاشْتِرَاكِ فِي أَخَصِّ الْأَوْصَافِ ، فَإِنَّ الْعِلْمَ مِنَّا لَهُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَوْصَافٍ : مَوْجُودٌ وَعَرَضٌ وَعِلْمٌ . فَالْوُجُودُ أَعَمُّ أَوْصَافِهِ وَالْعَرَضِيَّةُ أَوْسَطُهَا وَكَوْنُهُ عِلْمًا أَخَصُّهَا . فَالْعِلْمُ يُمَاثِلُ الْعِلْمَ مِنْ حَيْثُ كَوْنُهُ عِلْمًا لَا مِنْ حَيْثُ كَوْنُهُ مَوْجُودًا وَعَرَضًا . وَلِهَذَا امْتَنَعُوا عَن وَصْفِ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِالْعِلْمِ نَفْيًا لِلْمُمَاثَلَةِ بَيْنَ اللهِ وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ . وَهَذَا أَيْضًا فَاسِدٌ ، فَإِنَّ الْقُدْرَةَ الَّتِي يَحْمِلُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِهَا عَشَرَةَ أَمْنَاءٍ تُشَارِكُ الْقُدْرَةَ الَّتِي يَحْمِلُ بِهَا غَيْرُهُ مِائَةَ مَنٍّ فِي أَخَصِّ أَوْصَافِهَا ، وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ لَا تُمَاثِلُهَا .

وَعِنْدَنَا الْمُمَاثَلَةُ إِنَّمَا تَثْبُتُ بِالِاشْتِرَاكِ فِي جَمِيعِ الْأَوْصَافِ ، حَتَّى لَوِ اخْتَلَفَا فِي وَصْفٍ وَاحِدٍ لَانْتَفَتِ الْمُمَاثَلَةُ . مِثَالُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ مِنَّا مَوْجُودٌ وَعَرَضٌ وَعِلْمٌ وَمُحْدَثٌ وَجَائِزُ الْوُجُودِ وَيَتَجَدَّدُ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ . وَلَوْ أَثْبَتْنَا الْعِلْمَ صِفَةً لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى لَكَانَ مَوْجُودًا وَصِفَةً وَعِلْمًا وَقَدِيمًا وَوَاجِبَ الْوُجُودِ وَدَائِمًا مِنَ الْأَزَلِ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ ، فَلَا يُمَاثِلُ عِلْمَ الْخَلْقِ بِوَجْهٍ مِنَ الْوُجُوهِ .

So according to us, the defining feature of two likenesses is that all qualities possible for one of them are possible for the other, although some say their defining feature is that one is interchangeable with the other. [Regardless,] this is not the case when comparing the attributes of God with those of creation, so the two are not likenesses [but in fact, categorically dissimilar]. And God alone is the One who enables.

ON THE ETERNALITY OF DIVINE SPEECH

The People of Truth state that God, the exalted, is a speaker with one [attribute of] speech that is eternal, atemporal, and ascribed to His entity, never parting from it nor separable whatsoever. It is not from the genus of letters or sounds, nor divisible or composed of parts.[45] The majority of the Muʿtazilites think that God, the exalted, was not a speaker in eternity until He created for Himself speech and then spoke with it. Hence [in their estimation], His speech is temporal and not ascribed to His entity. They then differed among themselves: some said that it is from the genus of letters and sounds, such that He became a speaker by creating letters and sounds in the place of recitation; others said that it is from the genus of letters and forms, such that He became a speaker by creating letters in the preserved tablet (*lawḥ maḥfūẓ*). Some people say, "We believe in and affirm the speech of God, the exalted, yet desist from affirming it as temporal or eternal, as created or uncreated."

وَحَدُّ الْمِثْلَيْنِ عِنْدَنَا أَن يَجُوزَ عَلَى أَحَدِهِمَا مِنَ الْأَوْصَافِ مَا يَجُوزُ عَلَى الْآخَرِ ، وَقِيلَ حَدُّ الْمِثْلَيْنِ مَا يَسُدُّ أَحَدُهُمَا مَسَدَّ الْآخَرِ ، وَهَذَا مَنْفِيٌّ بَيْنَ صِفَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَصِفَاتِ الْخَلْقِ ، فَلَا يَكُونَانِ مِثْلَيْنِ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

القَوْلُ فِي أَزَلِيَّةِ كَلَامِ اللهِ تَعَالَى

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى مُتَكَلِّمٌ بِكَلَامٍ وَاحِدٍ أَزَلِيٍّ أَبَدِيٍّ قَائِمٍ بِذَاتِهِ ، لَا يُفَارِقُ ذَاتَهُ وَلَا يُزَايِلُهُ ، لَيْسَ مِنْ جِنْسِ الْحُرُوفِ وَالْأَصْوَاتِ ، غَيْرِ مُتَجَزِّئٍ وَلَا مُتَبَعِّضٍ . وَزَعَمَ جُمْهُورُ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى لَمْ يَكُن مُتَكَلِّمًا فِي الْأَزَلِ حَتَّى خَلَقَ لِنَفْسِهِ كَلَامًا ثُمَّ تَكَلَّمَ بِهِ ، وَأَنَّ كَلَامَهُ حَادِثٌ غَيْرُ قَائِمٍ بِذَاتِهِ . ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي مَا بَيْنَهُمْ : قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِنَّهُ مِنْ جِنْسِ الْحُرُوفِ وَالْأَصْوَاتِ ، حَتَّى صَارَ مُتَكَلِّمًا بِخَلْقِ الْحُرُوفِ وَالْأَصْوَاتِ فِي مَحَلِّ الْقِرَاءَةِ ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِنَّهُ مِنْ جِنْسِ الْحُرُوفِ وَالْأَشْكَالِ ، حَتَّى صَارَ مُتَكَلِّمًا بِإِحْدَاثِ الْحُرُوفِ فِي اللَّوْحِ الْمَحْفُوظِ . وَقَالَ بَعْضُ النَّاسِ نُؤْمِنُ وَنُقِرُّ بِكَلَامِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَلَكِن نَتَوَقَّفُ فِي أَنَّهُ حَادِثٌ أَوْ قَدِيمٌ ، مَخْلُوقٌ أَوْ غَيْرُ مَخْلُوقٍ .

Our proof in this matter is that if a living being does not possess the attribute of speech, then he has one of its opposites, such as muteness, silence, or infancy, all of which entail deficiency—ever exalted above that is God. Also, if He were eternally divested of speech and then came to be attributed with it later, He would have changed from a previous state, and change is an indicator of temporality. Moreover, if speech were temporal, it would have occurred either in His entity, as the Karrāmiyyah think, whereby He would be rendered a locus for temporal things; or it would have occurred in no locus, which is impossible and which no one claims and because, if it were not an attribute of a locus, then its ascription to this entity would not have precedence over its ascription to another entity; or it would have occurred in another locus, which would then be the speaker with it, not the One who created it, as is the case with blackness, whiteness, movement, stillness, and all other traits.[46]

To proceed, the reality of speech is the meaning ascribed to an entity[47] that is *signified by* letters and sounds, as the poet said:

> *Verily, speech is in the heart, and*
> *The tongue was made [to be] only an indicator of the heart.*

وَحُجَّتُنَا فِي ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْحَيَّ لَوْ لَمْ يَكُن مَوْصُوفًا بِالْكَلَامِ لَكَانَ مَوْصُوفًا بِضِدٍّ مِنْ أَضْدَادِهِ ، نَحْوَ الْخَرَسِ وَالسُّكُوتِ وَالطُّفُولِيَّةِ ، وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ مِنَ النَّقَائِصِ ، تَعَالَى اللهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ؛ وَلِأَنَّ التَّعَرِّيَ عَنِ الْكَلَامِ لَوْ كَانَ ثَابِتًا فِي الْأَزَلِ ثُمَّ اتَّصَفَ بِالْكَلَامِ لَتَغَيَّرَ عَمَّا كَانَ عَلَيْهِ ، وَالتَّغَيُّرُ مِنْ أَمَارَاتِ الْحَدَثِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْكَلَامَ لَوْ كَانَ حَادِثًا لَا يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَ فِي ذَاتِهِ كَمَا زَعَمَتِ الْكَرَّامِيَّةُ فَيَصِيرُ مَحَلًّا لِلْحَوَادِثِ ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَ لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ وَأَنَّهُ مُحَالٌ ، وَلَا قَائِلَ بِهِ ، وَلِأَنَّهُ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ قَائِمًا بِمَحَلٍّ لَا يَكُونُ اتِّصَافُ هَذَا الذَّاتِ بِهِ أَوْلَى مِنِ اتِّصَافِ ذَاتٍ آخَرَ ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَ فِي مَحَلٍّ آخَرَ فَيَكُونُ الْمُتَكَلِّمُ بِهِ ذَلِكَ الْمَحَلَّ لَا مَنْ أَحْدَثَهُ ، كَالسَّوَادِ وَالْبَيَاضِ وَالْحَرَكَةِ وَالسُّكُونِ وَسَائِرِ الصِّفَاتِ .

ثُمَّ حَقِيقَةُ الْكَلَامِ هُوَ الْمَعْنَى الْقَائِمُ بِالذَّاتِ الَّذِي تَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ الْحُرُوفُ وَالْأَصْوَاتُ ، كَمَا قَالَ الشَّاعِرُ :

إِنَّ الْكَلَامَ لَفِي الْفُؤَادِ وَإِنَّمَا ... جُعِلَ اللِّسَانُ عَلَى الْفُؤَادِ دَلِيلًا

For this reason, linguists call every expression that signifies a meaning "speech," nothing else. The Qur'an itself explicitly mentions internal speech, as the Exalted says, "And they say within themselves" (58:8). And a man will [customarily] say to another, "I have some *speech* I would like to inform you of."[48] These words are all called speech only because they signify speech. Likewise, the community is in agreement on calling that which is in a copy of the Qur'an (*muṣḥaf*) "the speech of God, the exalted," and they also call what the reciter recites "the speech of God, the exalted."

We are in agreement with our opponents that the speech of God, the exalted, is one attribute, with one reality. And the reality of forms inscribed on paper differs from the reality of fragmented sounds emanating from palates. So if written words [alone] were literally speech, then fragmented sounds would not literally be speech, and vice versa. Yet despite that, each of the two is called speech, and the two share no common trait except signification (*dalālah*), for indeed the written [word] *signifies* exactly what the uttered [word] does; therefore, it is clear that each of the two is called speech due to its signification of speech. This, then, is the meaning of the statement of our predecessors ﷺ "Verily, the speech of God, the exalted, is written in our Qur'anic copies, recited on our tongues, and preserved in our hearts," not that it literally subsists therein, just as fire is mentioned on the tongue and written on paper, yet does not literally subsist therein.

وَلِهَذَا سَمَّى أَهْلُ اللُّغَةِ كُلَّ عِبَارَةٍ تَدُلُّ عَلَى مَعْنًى كَلَامًا لَا غَيْرَ. وَقَدْ صَرَّحَ الْكِتَابُ بِكَلَامِ النَّفْسِ حَيْثُ قَالَ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَيَقُولُونَ فِيٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ ﴾، وَالرَّجُلُ يَقُولُ لِغَيْرِهِ «لِي مَعَكَ كَلَامٌ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخْبِرَكَ بِهِ»، إِلَّا أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْأَلْفَاظَ سُمِّيَتْ كَلَامًا لِدَلَالَتِهَا عَلَى الْكَلَامِ. وَكَذَا الْأُمَّةُ أَجْمَعَتْ عَلَى تَسْمِيَةِ مَا فِي الْمُصْحَفِ كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى، وَكَذَا سَمَّوْا مَا يَقْرَأُهُ الْقَارِئُ أَيْضًا كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى.

وَاتَّفَقْنَا مَعَ الْخُصُومِ عَلَى أَنَّ كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى مَعْنًى وَاحِدٌ، وَلَهُ حَقِيقَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ، وَالْأَشْكَالُ الْمَنْقُوشَةُ عَلَى الْقِرْطَاسِ تُخَالِفُ بِحَقِيقَتِهَا الْأَصْوَاتَ الْمُقَطَّعَةَ فِي اللَّهَوَاتِ. فَلَوْ كَانَتِ الْحُرُوفُ الْمَكْتُوبَةُ كَلَامًا حَقِيقَةً لَمْ تَكُنِ الْأَصْوَاتُ الْمُقَطَّعَةُ كَلَامًا عَلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ، وَكَذَا عَلَى الْقَلْبِ. وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ سُمِّيَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا كَلَامًا، وَلَا مُنَاسَبَةَ بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا مِنْ حَيْثُ الدَّلَالَةُ، فَإِنَّ الْمَكْتُوبَ يَدُلُّ عَلَى عَيْنِ مَا يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ الْمَلْفُوظُ، فَعُلِمَ أَنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا سُمِّيَ كَلَامًا لِدَلَالَتِهِ عَلَى الْكَلَامِ، وَهُوَ مَعْنَى قَوْلِ سَلَفِنَا الصَّالِحِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ «إِنَّ كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى مَكْتُوبٌ فِي مَصَاحِفِنَا مَقْرُوءٌ بِأَلْسِنَتِنَا مَحْفُوظٌ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غَيْرُ حَالٍّ فِيهَا»، كَمَا أَنَّ النَّارَ مَذْكُورَةٌ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ مَكْتُوبَةٌ عَلَى الْقِرْطَاسِ غَيْرُ حَالَّةٍ فِيهِمَا.

As for the word *Qur'an*, it is sometimes used to refer to what is recited (*maqrū'*), sometimes to recitation itself (*qirā'ah*), and sometimes to what is written (*maktūb*). So if the word *Qur'an* is mentioned in the context of "what is recited,"[49] then it is eternal and uncreated, such as our statement "The Qur'an is the uncreated speech of God." If it is mentioned in the context of "recitation," such as "I recited half the Qur'an, or a third of it, or a fourth of it," or in the context of "what is written," such as "It is unlawful for one in a state of ritual impurity to touch the Qur'an," then it is used to mean the letters that signify God's speech, and is hence temporal and created. This is in opposition to what some Hanbalis grossly misunderstood—namely, that the letters of the Qur'an are uncreated, which is absurd since that which is divisible and composite must necessarily be temporal and created.

The opinion of those who refrain from judgment as to whether God's speech is temporal or eternal, created or uncreated, is also absurd, as refraining from judgment entails doubt, and doubt with respect to obligatory beliefs is akin to denial. Such a person is like one who claims, "I believe that God, the exalted, exists, but refrain from passing judgment as to whether He is one, two, or three, since people disagree on that."

If it is said: If the speech of God were eternal, and it includes commands and prohibitions, then how can commands and prohibitions exist eternally if the one being commanded and prohibited does not yet exist? We respond: Just as it is valid in your estimation for people in our current time to be addressed by speech that occurred in the time of the Prophet ﷺ, although they did not exist at that time;

فَأَمَّا الْقُرْآنُ ، تَارَةً يُطْلَقُ عَلَى الْمَقْرُوءِ وَتَارَةً يُطْلَقُ عَلَى الْقِرَاءَةِ وَتَارَةً يُطْلَقُ عَلَى الْمَكْتُوبِ . فَإِذَا ذُكِرَ لَفْظُ الْقُرْآنِ مَعَ قَرِينَةٍ تَدُلُّ عَلَى الْمَقْرُوءِ كَانَ قَدِيمًا غَيْرَ مَخْلُوقٍ ، كَمَا قُلْنَا الْقُرْآنُ كَلَامُ اللهِ غَيْرُ مَخْلُوقٍ ؛ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ مَعَ قَرِينَةٍ تَدُلُّ عَلَى الْقِرَاءَةِ ، كَمَا يُقَالُ قَرَأْتُ نِصْفَ الْقُرْآنِ أَوْ ثُلُثَهُ أَوْ رُبُعَهُ ، أَوْ ذُكِرَ مَعَ قَرِينَةٍ تَدُلُّ عَلَى الْمَكْتُوبِ ، كَمَا يُقَالُ يَحْرُمُ عَلَى الْمُحْدِثِ مَسُّ الْقُرْآنِ ، كَانَ الْمُرَادُ مِنْهُ الْحُرُوفَ الدَّالَّةَ عَلَى كَلَامِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فَيَكُونُ حَادِثًا وَمَخْلُوقًا ، خِلَافًا لِمَا تَوَهَّمَتِ الْحَنَابِلَةُ أَنَّ حُرُوفَ الْقُرْآنِ غَيْرُ مَخْلُوقَةٍ ، فَهُوَ بَاطِلٌ ، لِمَا أَنَّ مَا يَتَجَزَّأُ وَيَتَبَعَّضُ لَا بُدَّ وَأَن يَكُونَ حَادِثًا مَخْلُوقًا .

وَقَوْلُ مَنْ تَوَقَّفَ فِي أَنَّ كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى حَادِثٌ أَمْ قَدِيمٌ ، مَخْلُوقٌ أَمْ غَيْرُ مَخْلُوقٍ ، بَاطِلٌ لِأَنَّ التَّوَقُّفَ يُوجِبُ الشَّكَّ وَالشَّكُّ فِيمَا يُفْتَرَضُ اعْتِقَادُهُ كَالْإِنْكَارِ ، فَيَكُونُ كَمَنْ زَعَمَ أَنِّي أَعْتَقِدُ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى مَوْجُودٌ وَلَكِنْ أَتَوَقَّفُ فِي أَنَّهُ وَاحِدٌ أَوِ اثْنَانِ أَوْ ثَلَاثَةٌ لِاخْتِلَافِ النَّاسِ فِي ذَلِكَ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ كَانَ كَلَامُ اللهِ تَعَالَى قَدِيمًا وَهُوَ أَمْرٌ وَنَهْيٌ ، كَيْفَ يَصِحُّ الْأَمْرُ وَالنَّهْيُ فِي الْأَزَلِ وَالْمَأْمُورُ وَالْمَنْهِيُّ لَمْ يُوجَدْ بَعْدُ ؟ قُلْنَا كَمَا صَحَّ عِنْدَكُمُ الْخِطَابُ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ فِي عَصْرِنَا الْآنَ بِكَلَامٍ حَدَثَ فِي عَصْرِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَهُمْ مَعْدُومُونَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْوَقْتِ ،

every response of yours on that issue is our response on this one. We then add that a command issued to someone who does not exist, so as to be immediately mandatory [that is, at that time, prior to his existence], is invalid; yet a command for someone nonexistent to be mandatory at the time of his existence is valid. If it is said: We hear the statement of God, the exalted, "Verily, We sent Noah to his people" (71:1). How can an eternal statement of the sending of Noah ﷺ be valid with the past tense usage, while both Noah ﷺ and his people did not yet exist? We respond: God's speech is not divided into past and future tense; rather, we maintain that in eternity, an unconditioned statement regarding the sending of Noah ﷺ is ascribed to God's entity, and it remains from anterior eternity to posterior eternity. Before the sending, the form used *to signify it* is "Verily, We will send Noah," and after the sending it is "Verily, We sent Noah." The difference, then, is in the message conveyed, not in the conveying [that is, speech itself]. This is analogous to what we say regarding the knowledge of God, the exalted—namely, that in eternity, knowledge that Noah ﷺ is a messenger is ascribed to God's entity, and His knowledge remains from anterior eternity to posterior eternity. Before his existence, He knows that he will exist and be sent; while after his existence, He knows with that very knowledge that he existed and was sent. The change, then, is in what is known, not in the knowledge itself; the same applies here.

To proceed, Sunnis differed regarding whether or not the speech of God, the exalted, can be heard; al-Ashʿarī[50] maintained that just as every existent can be seen, so too can it be heard. Ibn Fūrak[51] stated that what is heard when a person recites the Qur'an is two things: the voice of the reciter, and the speech of God, the exalted.

فَكُلُّ جَوَابٍ لَكُمْ فِيهِ فَهُوَ جَوَابُنَا عَنْ هَذَا الْإِشْكَالِ . ثُمَّ نَقُولُ الْأَمْرُ لِلْمَعْدُومِ لِيَجِبَ فِي الْحَالِ لَا يَجُوزُ ، وَأَمَّا الْأَمْرُ لِلْمَعْدُومِ لِيَجِبَ وَقْتَ وُجُودِهِ ، جَائِزٌ . فَإِنْ قِيلَ سَمِعْنَا اللهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ ﴿ إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦٓ ﴾ ، كَيْفَ يَسْتَقِيمُ الْإِخْبَارُ فِي الْأَزَلِ عَنْ إِرْسَالِ نُوحٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِلَفْظِ الْمَاضِي وَنُوحٌ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَقَوْمُهُ لَمْ يُوجَدَا بَعْدُ ؟ قُلْنَا إِخْبَارُ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَا يَتَنَوَّعُ إِلَى الْمَاضِي وَالْمُسْتَقْبَلِ ، بَلْ نَقُولُ قَامَ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِي الْأَزَلِ إِخْبَارٌ عَنْ إِرْسَالِ نُوحٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مُطْلَقًا ، وَإِنَّهُ بَاقٍ مِنَ الْأَزَلِ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ ، فَقَبْلَ الْإِرْسَالِ كَانَتِ الصِّيغَةُ الدَّالَّةُ عَلَيْهِ (إِنَّا نُرْسِلُ نُوحًا) ، وَبَعْدَ الْإِرْسَالِ (إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا) ، وَالتَّغَيُّرُ فِي الْمُخْبَرِ لَا فِي الْإِخْبَارِ . هَذَا كَمَا قُلْنَا فِي عِلْمِ اللهِ تَعَالَى إِنَّهُ قَامَ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِي الْأَزَلِ عِلْمٌ بِأَنَّ نُوحًا مُرْسَلٌ ، وَعِلْمُهُ بَاقٍ مِنَ الْأَزَلِ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ ، فَقَبْلَ وُجُودِهِ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ سَيُوجَدُ وَيُرْسَلُ ، وَبَعْدَ وُجُودِهِ عَلِمَ بِذَلِكَ الْعِلْمِ أَنَّهُ وُجِدَ وَأُرْسِلَ ، فَيَكُونُ التَّغَيُّرُ فِي الْمَعْلُومِ لَا فِي الْعِلْمِ ، فَكَذَا هَذَا .

ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ أَنَّ كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى مَسْمُوعٌ أَمْ غَيْرُ مَسْمُوعٍ . فَاخْتَارَ الْأَشْعَرِيُّ أَنَّ كُلَّ مَوْجُودٍ كَمَا يَجُوزُ أَن يُرَى يَجُوزُ أَن يُسْمَعَ . وَقَالَ ابْنُ فُورَكَ الْمَسْمُوعُ عِنْدَ قِرَاءَةِ الْقَارِئِ شَيْئَانِ : صَوْتُ الْقَارِئِ وَكَلَامُ اللهِ تَعَالَى .

Al-Bāqillānī[52] stated that His speech—may His remembrance be magnified—is not customarily heard, yet it is possible for God, the exalted, to cause whomever He wills of His creation to hear His speech, contrary to the customary norm. According to these theologians, Moses ﷺ heard the actual speech of God, the exalted, [alluding to the Qur'anic verse "God indeed spoke to Moses" (4:164)], without any intermediary of sound or letters. Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī[53] [d. 418/1027] and those who followed him maintained that His speech—may His remembrance be magnified—in and of itself cannot be heard; this is the position of the imam of guidance and head of the Sunnis, Abū Manṣūr [al-Māturīdī][54]—may God illuminate his traces of purification. And, with His statement "Until he hears the speech of God" (9:6), the Exalted means "Until he hears *that which signifies* the speech of God," just as it is said, "I heard so-and-so's opinion" [lit. knowledge] (that is, "that which signifies his opinion"), or as it is said, "Look at the power of God" (that is, "at what signifies His power"). According to these theologians, Moses ﷺ heard a sound signifying the speech of God, the exalted, yet without an intermediary of a book or angel; so for that reason, he was called "The one spoken to by God" (*kalīm Allāh*). This is further explained in *Al-Kifāyah*.[55] And guidance is from God alone.

ON THE ACT OF CREATING AND THE CREATED

Our fellow Māturīdīs state that all divine attributes are eternal and ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted. The Ashʿarīs and Mu'tazilites state that the attributes of an entity, such as knowledge and power, are eternal and ascribed to the entity of God; while attributes of action, such as the act of creating (*takwīn*),[56] giving sustenance (*tarzīq*), giving life (*iḥyā'*), causing death (*imātah*), etc., are temporal and not ascribed to the entity of God.[57]

وَقَالَ الْبَاقِلَّانِيُّ كَلَامُهُ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ غَيْرُ مَسْمُوعٍ عَلَى الْعَادَةِ الْجَارِيَةِ ، وَلَكِن يَجُوزُ أَن يُسْمِعَ اللهُ تَعَالَى كَلَامَهُ مَنْ شَاءَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ عَلَى خِلَافِ الْعَادَةِ . وَعِنْدَ هَؤُلَاءِ سَمِعَ مُوسَى صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ كَلَامَ اللهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ غَيْرِ وَاسِطَةِ الصَّوْتِ وَالْحُرُوفِ . وَقَالَ أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ الْأَسْفَرَايِينِيُّ وَمَنْ تَابَعَهُ إِنَّ كَلَامَهُ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ غَيْرُ مَسْمُوعٍ أَصْلًا ، وَهُوَ اخْتِيَارُ إِمَامِ الْهُدَى رَئِيسِ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ أَبِي مَنْصُورٍ بَيَّضَ اللهُ غُرَّتَهُ . وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَٰمَ ٱللَّهِ ﴾ أَرَادَ بِهِ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ مَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى كَلَامِ اللهِ ، كَمَا يُقَالُ سَمِعْتُ عِلْمَ فُلَانٍ أَيْ مَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى عِلْمِهِ ، أَوْ يُقَالُ انْظُرْ إِلَى قُدْرَةِ اللهِ أَيْ إِلَى مَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى قُدْرَتِهِ . وَعِنْدَ هَؤُلَاءِ سَمِعَ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ صَوْتًا دَالًّا عَلَى كَلَامِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ وَاسِطَةُ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمَلَكِ ، فَسُمِّيَ كَلِيمَ اللهِ لِذَلِكَ ، وَشَرْحُهُ فِي الْكِفَايَةِ . وَمِنَ اللهِ الْهِدَايَةُ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي التَّكْوِينِ وَالْمُكَوَّنِ

قَالَ أَصْحَابُنَا رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ جَمِيعَ الصِّفَاتِ قَدِيمَةٌ قَائِمَةٌ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى . وَقَالَتِ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةُ وَالْمُعْتَزِلَةُ مَا كَانَ مِنْ صِفَاتِ الذَّاتِ فَهُوَ قَدِيمٌ قَائِمٌ بِذَاتِ اللهِ ، نَحْوَ الْعِلْمِ وَالْقُدْرَةِ ، وَمَا كَانَ مِنْ صِفَاتِ الْفِعْلِ فَهُوَ حَادِثٌ غَيْرُ قَائِمٍ بِذَاتِ اللهِ ، نَحْوَ التَّكْوِينِ وَالتَّرْزِيقِ وَالْإِحْيَاءِ وَالْإِمَاتَةِ وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ .

They then differed among themselves regarding the act of creating, in that if it is not ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, is it [the act of creating] identical to what is created, or is it other than what is created? [Imam] al-Ashʿarī considered it to be identical to what is created, while most Mu'tazilites deemed it to be other than what is created. The Mu'tazilites then differed as to its locus; Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf[58] [d. 235/850] stated that the act of creating subsists in what is created, while Ibn al-Rāwandī[59] [d. 298/910] and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir[60] [d. 210/825] stated that it has no locus. The Karrāmiyyah state that the act of creating is temporal yet ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted. According to them, God, the exalted, is eternally described as being "creator" (*al-khāliqiyyah*)—that is, having the power [or ability] to create.

The correct position is ours, due to the Exalted's statement "He is God, the creator" (59:24). He describes His entity as "creator," and both His entity and His speech are eternal; so if the act of creating were temporal, God, the exalted, would not be described with it in [anterior] eternity, whereby it [the Qur'anic statement] would be either a lie or a metaphor—far exalted above that is God. To understand, *creator* [in Arabic] is a noun derived from [the root meaning] "to create," just as *knower* [is derived] from "to know." A noun derived from a meaning can apply only to one who has that meaning as an attribute, such as *mover* to one to whom movement is ascribed.

ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ أَنَّ التَّكْوِينَ إِذَا لَمْ يَقُمْ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى هَلْ هُوَ عَيْنُ الْمُكَوَّنِ أَوْ غَيْرُهُ ؟ فَزَعَمَ الأَشْعَرِيُّ أَنَّهُ عَيْنُ الْمُكَوَّنِ ، وَزَعَمَ عَامَّةُ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ أَنَّهُ وَرَاءَ الْمُكَوَّنِ . ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ فِي مَحَلِّهِ ؛ قَالَ أَبُو الْهُذَيْلِ الْعَلَّافُ إِنَّ التَّكْوِينَ قَائِمٌ بِالْمُكَوَّنِ ، وَقَالَ ابْنُ الرَّاوَنْدِيِّ وَبِشْرُ بْنُ الْمُعْتَمِرِ إِنَّهُ لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ . وَقَالَتِ الْكَرَّامِيَّةُ إِنَّ التَّكْوِينَ حَادِثٌ قَائِمٌ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى . وَيُوصَفُ اللهُ تَعَالَى عِنْدَهُمْ فِي الْأَزَلِ بِأَنَّهُ خَالِقٌ بِمَعْنَى الْخَالِقِيَّةِ ، وَأَنَّهَا عِبَارَةٌ عَنِ الْقُدْرَةِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ .

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا قُلْنَا ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْخَٰلِقُ ﴾ ، وَصَفَ ذَاتَهُ بِأَنَّهُ خَالِقٌ ، وَذَاتُهُ أَزَلِيٌّ وَكَلَامُهُ أَزَلِيٌّ ، فَلَوْ كَانَ التَّكْوِينُ حَادِثًا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللهُ تَعَالَى مَوْصُوفًا بِهِ فِي الْأَزَلِ ، فَيَكُونُ كَذِبًا أَوْ مَجَازًا ، تَعَالَى اللهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا . وَتَحْقِيقُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْخَالِقَ اسْمٌ مُشْتَقٌّ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ كَالْعَالِمِ مُشْتَقٌّ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ، وَإِنَّمَا يَتَحَقَّقُ الِاسْمُ الْمُشْتَقُّ مِنَ الْمَعْنَى عَلَى مَنْ قَامَ بِهِ ذَلِكَ الْمَعْنَى ، كَالْمُتَحَرِّكِ يُطْلَقُ عَلَى مَنْ قَامَتْ بِهِ الْحَرَكَةُ .

The interpretation of the verse by the Karrāmiyyah that He is "creator in eternity" (*al-khāliqiyyah*)—that is, having the power [or ability] to create—is an incorrect interpretation because the noun derived from "power" (*qudrah*) is "one who is powerful" (*qādir*), not "creator" (*khāliq*). Also, someone with the ability to commit adultery is not described as being an adulterer; the same applies with all traits. Moreover, the term *creator* is a noun of praise, so if He were not eternally described with it, yet is so now, then He would have acquired, by the existence of creation, additional praise that He did not have in eternity, which is absurd and impossible.

As for logical evidence, if the act of creating were temporal, then it would be so either by God's creating it, or not. If they claim the first, then we would ask, "Is *that* act of creating eternal or temporal?" If they say it is eternal, then that is what we are putting forth; if they say temporal, then the original question is posed, ad infinitum. If they say it occurs without any act of creating, then our response is that if the existence of something temporal is possible without an act of creating, then the existence of all temporal things would also be possible without it, which entails denial of the Creator.

Also, if the act of creating were temporal, it would occur either in the entity of God, the exalted, as the Karrāmiyyah suggest, which is absurd since it renders the Eternal a locus for temporal things; or it would occur in no locus, as Ibn al-Rāwandī and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir suggest, which is also impossible since no attribute can exist without a locus,

وَتَأْوِيلُ الْكَرَّامِيَّةِ الْآيَةَ بِأَنَّهُ خَالِقٌ فِي الْأَزَلِ بِمَعْنَى الْخَالِقِيَّةِ ، وَهُوَ عِبَارَةٌ عَنِ الْقُدْرَةِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ ، تَأْوِيلٌ فَاسِدٌ ؛ لِأَنَّ الِاسْمَ الْمُشْتَقَّ مِنَ الْقُدْرَةِ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ لَا الْخَالِقُ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْقَادِرَ عَلَى الزِّنَى لَا يُوصَفُ بِكَوْنِهِ زَانِيًا ، وَكَذَا فِي سَائِرِ الصِّفَاتِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ اسْمَ الْخَالِقِ اسْمُ مَدْحٍ ، فَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُن مَوْصُوفًا بِهِ فِي الْأَزَلِ وَاتَّصَفَ بِهِ الْآنَ فَقَدِ اكْتَسَبَ بِوُجُودِ الْخَلْقِ زِيَادَةَ مَدْحٍ لَمْ يَكُن لَهُ فِي الْأَزَلِ ، وَأَنَّهُ مُحَالٌ .

وَأَمَّا الْمَعْقُولُ فَهُوَ أَنَّ التَّكْوِينَ لَوْ كَانَ حَادِثًا لَا يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَن يَكُونَ حَادِثًا بِتَكْوِينِ اللهِ تَعَالَى إِيَّاهُ أَوْ بِدُونِ التَّكْوِينِ ، فَإِنْ قَالُوا بِالْأَوَّلِ فَنَقُولُ ذَلِكَ التَّكْوِينُ قَدِيمٌ أَمْ حَادِثٌ ؟ إِنْ قَالُوا قَدِيمٌ فَهُوَ الَّذِي نَدَّعِيهِ ، وَإِنْ قَالُوا حَادِثٌ فَيَعُودُ السُّؤَالُ إِلَى أَن يَتَسَلْسَلَ ، وَإِنْ قَالُوا بِدُونِ التَّكْوِينِ فَنَقُولُ إِذَا جَازَ حُدُوثُ حَادِثٍ بِدُونِ التَّكْوِينِ جَازَ أَيْضًا حُدُوثُ جَمِيعِ الْحَوَادِثِ ، وَفِيهِ تَعْطِيلُ الصَّانِعِ .

وَلِأَنَّ التَّكْوِينَ لَوْ كَانَ حَادِثًا لَا يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَ فِي ذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى كَمَا ذَهَبَتْ إِلَيْهِ الْكَرَّامِيَّةُ ، وَهَذَا فَاسِدٌ لِمَا فِيهِ مِنْ جَعْلِ الْقَدِيمِ مَحَلًّا لِلْحَوَادِثِ ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَ لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ كَمَا ذَهَبَ إِلَيْهِ ابْنُ الرَّاوَنْدِيِّ وَبِشْرُ بْنُ الْمُعْتَمِرِ ، وَهُوَ مُحَالٌ لِاسْتِحَالَةِ وُجُودِ الصِّفَةِ لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ ،

and because if the act of creating did not subsist in a locus, then its ascription to one entity would not take precedence over its ascription to another; or it would occur in another entity, as Abū al-Hudhayl suggests—that is, that the creating of each body subsists within that body. This results in each body being a creator of itself, which entails denial of the Creator. Not to mention, this position would not explain accidents, since it is impossible for something to subsist within an accident.

Moreover, if the act of creating were identical to what is created, or subsisted in it, then what is created would exist by itself and have no need of another for its existence, thereby rendering it eternal. Yet the only reason the opponent refuses to believe in the eternality of the act of creating is to avoid affirming eternality for created things, but has nevertheless ended up in what he was trying to avoid when treading this path of impossibility.

Furthermore, blackness [for example] is something created, and according to you, it itself is the act of creating. So every entity with the attribute of blackness unquestionably has the attribute of creating, due to the necessity of their being bound together. So if you describe an entity as being black, due to blackness subsisting within it, you must then describe it as being a creator, due to the act of creating subsisting within it. And, if you do not describe God, the exalted, as being black, due to blackness not subsisting within Him, then you cannot describe Him as being a creator, due to the act of creating not subsisting within Him. This is akin to a statement: if [the statement] is true, then every entity that makes the statement is a truthful informer; every entity that does not make the statement is neither an informer nor truthful, since [the act of making the statement and the description of being a truthful informer] are necessarily bound together.

وَلِأَنَّ التَّكْوِينَ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ قَائِمًا بِمَحَلٍّ لَمْ يَكُنِ اتِّصَافُ ذَاتٍ بِهِ أَوْلَى مِنِ اتِّصَافِ ذَاتٍ آخرَ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَ فِي ذَاتٍ آخرَ، كَمَا قَالَ أَبُو الهُذَيْلِ إِنَّ تَكْوِينَ كُلِّ جِسْمٍ قَائِمٌ بِذَلِكَ الجِسْمِ، فَيَلْزَمُ مِنْ هَذَا أَن يَكُونَ كُلُّ جِسْمٍ خَالِقًا وَمُكَوِّنًا لِنَفْسِهِ، وَفِيهِ تَعْطِيلُ الصَّانِعِ، عَلَى أَنَّ هَذَا الْكَلَامَ لَا يَصِحُّ فِي الْأَعْرَاضِ لِمَا أَنَّ قِيَامَ الشَّيْءِ بِالْعَرَضِ مُحَالٌ.

وَلِأَنَّ التَّكْوِينَ لَوْ كَانَ هُوَ الْمُكَوَّنَ أَوْ قَائِمًا بِهِ لَكَانَ وُجُودُ الْمُكَوَّنِ بِنَفْسِهِ وَاسْتَغْنَى فِي وُجُودِهِ عَنْ غَيْرِهِ، فَيَكُونُ قَدِيمًا، والخَصْمُ إِنَّمَا امْتَنَعَ عَنِ الْقَوْلِ بِقِدَمِ التَّكْوِينِ تَحَرُّزًا عَنِ الْقَوْلِ بِقِدَمِ الْمُكَوَّنَاتِ، وَقَدْ وَقَعَ فِيمَا تَحَرَّزَ عَنْهُ مَعَ رُكُوبِ هَذَا الْمُحَالِ.

وَلِأَنَّ السَّوَادَ لَمَّا كَانَ مُكَوَّنًا، وَهُوَ بِعَيْنِهِ تَكْوِينٌ عِنْدَكُمْ، فَكُلُّ ذَاتٍ قَامَ بِهِ السَّوَادُ قَامَ بِهِ التَّكْوِينُ لَا مَحَالَةَ، ضَرُورَةَ اتِّحَادِهِمَا. فَإِذَا وَصَفْتَ الذَّاتَ بِأَنَّهُ أَسْوَدُ لِقِيَامِ السَّوَادِ بِهِ، لَزِمَكَ أَنْ تَصِفَهُ بِأَنَّهُ مُكَوِّنٌ لِقِيَامِ التَّكْوِينِ بِهِ. وَإِذَا لَمْ تَصِفِ اللهَ تَعَالَى بِأَنَّهُ أَسْوَدُ لِأَنَّ السَّوَادَ لَمْ يَقُمْ بِهِ، لَا يُمْكِنُكَ أَنْ تَصِفَهُ بِأَنَّهُ مُكَوِّنٌ لِأَنَّ التَّكْوِينَ لَمْ يَقُمْ بِهِ. هَذَا كَالخَبَرِ، مَتَى كَانَ صِدْقًا فَكُلُّ ذَاتٍ قَامَ بِهِ الْخَبَرُ كَانَ مُخْبِرًا صَادِقًا، وَكُلُّ ذَاتٍ لَمْ يَقُمْ بِهِ الْخَبَرُ لَمْ يَكُن مُخْبِرًا وَلَا صَادِقًا، ضَرُورَةَ اتِّحَادِهِمَا.

If it is said: If the act of creating were eternal, ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, then the existence of the universe would be connected to it in eternity, rendering the universe eternal instead of temporal. We respond: By admitting the connection of the universe's existence to the act of creating, you have admitted the universe's temporality, since the eternal is that whose existence is not connected to anything else. That whose existence is connected to something else is temporal. We then add: In eternity, the act of creating did not exist with the consequence that the universe existed by it *in eternity*, but rather with the consequence that everything in the cosmos exists by it *at its [specific, appointed] time of existence*, based on His knowledge and will, while itself, the act of creating remains [unchanged] from anterior eternity to posterior eternity. The existence of every [possible, temporal] existent thing, then, is connected *at the time of its existence* to His eternal act of creating. This is akin to one who, in [the lunar month] Sha'ban, conjoins the divorce of his wife to [the lunar month] Ramadan; the connection remains effective until Ramadan so that the divorce occurs *at the time of its existence* by that [previous] connection. It is also like one who wounds a person on a Saturday, after which [that wound] spreads and infiltrates [the body], leading to the person's death on the following Friday; the one who inflicted the wound is [retrospectively] deemed a murderer on Saturday, even though the effect [of the wound] takes place on the following Friday. This issue is similar.[61]

That which ends all quarrel is our question: Is the existence of the universe connected to the entity of the Eternal or to one of His attributes, or not? If they say it is not, then they have explicitly denied the Creator; if they say it is, then we ask if that necessarily implies the eternality of the universe. Every response you put forth here is our response to this contention in the debate regarding the act of creating.

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ كَانَ التَّكْوِينُ أَزَلِيًّا وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، لَتَعَلَّقَ وُجُودُ الْعَالَمِ بِهِ فِي الْأَزَلِ ، فَيَكُونُ الْعَالَمُ قَدِيمًا لَا حَادِثًا . قُلْنَا مَتَى سَلَّمْتُمْ تَعَلُّقَ وُجُودِ الْعَالَمِ بِالتَّكْوِينِ فَقَدْ سَلَّمْتُمْ حُدُوثَ الْعَالَمِ ، إِذِ الْقَدِيمُ مَا لَا يَتَعَلَّقُ وُجُودُهُ بِغَيْرِهِ ، وَمَا تَعَلَّقَ وُجُودُهُ بِغَيْرِهِ فَهُوَ حَادِثٌ . ثُمَّ نَقُولُ التَّكْوِينُ فِي الْأَزَلِ مَا كَانَ لِيَكُونَ الْعَالَمُ بِهِ فِي الْأَزَلِ ، بَل لِيَكُونَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ كَائِنًا بِهِ وَقْتَ وُجُودِهِ عَلَى حَسَبِ عِلْمِهِ وَإِرَادَتِهِ ، وَتَكْوِينُهُ بَاقٍ مِنَ الْأَزَلِ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ ، فَيَتَعَلَّقُ وُجُودُ كُلِّ مَوْجُودٍ وَقْتَ وُجُودِهِ بِتَكْوِينِهِ الْأَزَلِيِّ . هَذَا كَمَنْ عَلَّقَ طَلَاقَ امْرَأَتِهِ فِي شَعْبَانَ بِدُخُولِ رَمَضَانَ ، يَبْقَى التَّعْلِيقُ حُكْمًا إِلَى رَمَضَانَ لِيَقَعَ الطَّلَاقُ وَقْتَ وُجُودِهِ بِذَلِكَ التَّعْلِيقِ ، وَكَمَنْ جَرَحَ إِنْسَانًا يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ فَسَرَى وَتَعَدَّى حَتَّى مَاتَ الْمَجْرُوحُ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ ، كَانَ الْجَارِحُ قَاتِلًا مِن يَوْمِ السَّبْتِ ، وَإِنْ ظَهَرَ أَثَرُهُ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ ، فَكَذَا هَذَا .

وَالْقَاطِعُ لِلشَّغَبِ أَن نَقُولَ هَلْ تَعَلَّقَ وُجُودُ الْعَالَمِ بِذَاتِ الْقَدِيمِ أَوْ بِصِفَةٍ مِنْ صِفَاتِهِ عِنْدَكُمْ ، أَمْ لَا ؟ إِنْ قَالُوا لَا ، فَقَدْ صَرَّحُوا بِتَعْطِيلِ الصَّانِعِ ، وَإِنْ قَالُوا نَعَمْ ، قُلْنَا هَلِ اقْتَضَى ذَلِكَ قِدَمَ الْعَالَمِ أَمْ لَا ؟ فَكُلُّ جَوَابٍ لَكُمْ عَنْهُ فَهُوَ جَوَابُنَا عَنْ هَذَا الْإِشْكَالِ فِي التَّكْوِينِ .

Finally, according to al-Ashʿarī, the existence of the universe is associated with the [divine] ontic command "Be!" which is thus an act of creating; [according to him,] it is eternal, ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted. This, then, contradicts his position in the debate regarding the act of creating. And God is the One who guides.

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SEEING GOD, THE EXALTED

The People of Truth maintain that seeing God, the exalted, with the eyes is logically possible and, based on revelation, necessary for [specifically] the believers in the abode of the hereafter. This is in opposition to the Mu'tazilites, Khawarij, Najjāriyyah, and Zaidi among the Shia. The Mu'tazilites differ among themselves as to whether God, the exalted, sees His own entity or not; most of them admit that He does, while a group of them deny that He sees [His entity] and that He can be seen.

The proof of the People of Truth is Moses' request to see God, the exalted, which He mentions with His statement [quoting Moses ﷺ] "My Lord, show me [Yourself], such that I may look upon You" (7:143). He made this request while knowing God as He should be known and while affirming divine transcendence above any resemblance to creation, directionality, or physically facing another; despite that, he still believed that God, the exalted, can be seen, to the extent that he even asked to see Him. So whoever thinks seeing God, the exalted, is impossible has claimed to know something of God's attributes of which Moses ﷺ was ignorant, which is absurd. Moreover, God, the exalted, conjoined the vision of Him with the remaining of the mountain, with His statement "So if it remains in its place, then you shall see Me" (7:143).

عَلَى أَنَّ عِنْدَ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ تَعَلَّقَ وُجُودُ الْعَالَمِ بِخِطَابِ « كُنْ » ، فَيَكُونُ تَكْوِينًا ، وَأَنَّهُ قَدِيمٌ قَائِمٌ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، فَيَكُونُ مُنَاقِضًا لِقَوْلِهِ فِي مَسْأَلَةِ التَّكْوِينِ . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي .

الْقَوْلُ فِي جَوَازِ رُؤْيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى

ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ إِلَى أَنَّ رُؤْيَةَ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِالْأَبْصَارِ جَائِزَةٌ عَقْلًا وَوَاجِبَةٌ سَمْعًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الدَّارِ الْآخِرَةِ ، خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ وَالْخَوَارِجِ وَالنَّجَّارِيَّةِ وَالزَّيْدِيَّةِ مِنَ الرَّوَافِضِ . وَافْتَرَقَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى هَلْ يَرَى ذَاتَهُ أَمْ لَا ؟ فَاعْتَرَفَتْ عَامَّتُهُمْ أَنَّهُ يَرَى ، وَأَنْكَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَن يَرَى وَيُرَى .

وَحُجَّةُ أَهْلِ الْحَقِّ سُؤَالُ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ الرُّؤْيَةَ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، كَمَا أَخْبَرَ بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ رَبِّ أَرِنِيٓ أَنظُرۡ إِلَيۡكَۚ ﴾ ، مَعَ أَنَّهُ عَرَفَ اللهَ تَعَالَى حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِهِ ، مُنَزَّهًا عَنِ التَّشْبِيهِ وَالْجِهَةِ وَالْمُقَابَلَةِ ، وَاعْتَقَدَ أَنَّهُ تَعَالَى مَعَ ذَلِكَ مَرْئِيٌّ حَتَّى سَأَلَهُ أَن يُرِيَهُ ، فَمَنْ زَعَمَ اسْتِحَالَةَ رُؤْيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فَقَدِ ادَّعَى مَعْرِفَةَ مَا جَهِلَهُ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مِنْ صِفَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَهَذَا فَاسِدٌ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى عَلَّقَ رُؤْيَتَهُ بِاسْتِقْرَارِ الْجَبَلِ بِقَوْلِهِ ﴿ فَإِنِ ٱسۡتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُۥ فَسَوۡفَ تَرَىٰنِيۚ ﴾ ؛

The mountain's remaining is logically possible, and connecting an event to another event that is possible indicates the possibility of the former. Also, God, the exalted, states that He revealed Himself to the mountain, which means that He created life, knowledge, and sight in the mountain, as mentioned by the shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr [al-Māturīdī] ﵀.[62] This too indicates the possibility of vision.

If it is said: If what you have mentioned indicates the possibility of vision, then the Exalted's statement "You will not see me" (7:143), which entails perpetual negation, points to the impossibility of vision. We respond: We used the verse as evidence for the possibility of vision; His statement "You will not see me" (7:143) entails a negation of occurrence in this world, not a negation of possibility, so there is no contradiction. And, with respect to the premise that it entails perpetual negation, we do not concede that "will not" (*lan*) indicates permanence, but rather only emphasis. The proof is the Exalted's statement, quoting Mary ﵍, "So I will not speak today to any human" (19:26). She conjoins it ["will not"] to "today," a word indicating a time limit, while permanence would be contradictory to an appointed time limit. And, even if it were for permanence, the intent would be negation in the abode of this life, not that of the hereafter. This is proven by the Exalted's statement "And they will not ever desire it, due to what their hands have brought forth" (2:95). He then states that in the hereafter they do desire death, by the Exalted's statement "And they call out, 'O Mālik, would that your Lord [would] decree [death] upon us'" (43:77).

وَاسْتِقْرَارُ الْجَبَلِ مُمْكِنٌ عَقْلًا ، وَالتَّعْلِيقُ بِالْمُمْكِنِ يَدُلُّ عَلَى إِمْكَانِهِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى أَخْبَرَ أَنَّهُ تَجَلَّى لِلْجَبَلِ ، وَهُوَ عِبَارَةٌ عَنْ خَلْقِ الْحَيَاةِ وَالْعِلْمِ وَالرُّؤْيَةِ فِي الْجَبَلِ ، نَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ ، فَيَدُلُّ عَلَى جَوَازِ الرُّؤْيَةِ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ إِنْ كَانَ مَا ذَكَرْتُمْ يَدُلُّ عَلَى جَوَازِ الرُّؤْيَةِ فَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ لَن تَرَىٰنِي ﴾ ، وَأَنَّهُ يَقْتَضِي النَّفْيَ عَلَى التَّأْبِيدِ ، يَدُلُّ عَلَى اسْتِحَالَةِ الرُّؤْيَةِ . قُلْنَا نَحْنُ اسْتَدْلَلْنَا بِالْآيَةِ عَلَى جَوَازِ الرُّؤْيَةِ ، وَقَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ﴿ لَن تَرَىٰنِي ﴾ يَقْتَضِي نَفْيَ الْوُجُودِ فِي الدُّنْيَا لَا نَفْيَ الْجَوَازِ ، فَلَا يَقَعُ التَّعَارُضُ . وَقَوْلُهُ إِنَّهُ نَفْيٌ عَلَى التَّأْبِيدِ ، قُلْنَا لَا نُسَلِّمُ بِأَنَّ كَلِمَةَ « لَنْ » لِلتَّأْبِيدِ ، بَلْ هِيَ لِلتَّأْكِيدِ فَحَسْبُ ، وَالدَّلِيلُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى خَبَرًا عَن مَرْيَمَ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ ﴿ فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ ٱلْيَوْمَ إِنسِيًّا ﴾ ، قَرَنَهَا بِالْيَوْمِ ، وَأَنَّهُ لِلتَّوْقِيتِ ، وَالتَّأْبِيدُ مَعَ التَّأْقِيتِ يَتَنَاقَضَانِ . وَلَوْ كَانَ لِلتَّأْبِيدِ لَكَانَ الْمُرَادُ بِهِ النَّفْيَ فِي دَارِ الدُّنْيَا لَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ ، وَالدَّلِيلُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَلَن يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ﴾ ، ثُمَّ أَخْبَرَ أَنَّهُمْ يَتَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَنَادَوْا۟ يَـٰمَـٰلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ﴾ .

Likewise, the Exalted's statement "Faces on that day will be gleaming, looking at their Lord" (75:22–23) indicates the believers' vision of their Lord on the Day of Arising, while they are in Paradise, for linguists are in agreement that the word "to look" (*naẓar*) when conjoined with "at" (*ilā*) is used to mean seeing with the eye. Another proof, among other verses, is the Exalted's statement "So whoever hopes to meet his Lord" (18:110), since "to meet" is to behold. Also, regarding the Exalted's statement "For those who excel is the most excellent reward, and more" (10:26), most exegetes mention, narrating from God's Messenger ﷺ, that what is meant by "more" is the beatific vision.

Moreover, the hadith narrations on this issue are many, the most well-known being the Prophet's statement "Verily, you all will see your Lord just as you see the moon on a clear night, without any hindrance or overcrowding among you."[63] In this statement, there is a likening of the vision of God, the exalted, to that of the moon, with respect to certitude and clarity, not a likening of what is seen with what is seen. The transmitters of the hadith of the beatific vision are twenty-one in number, from among the most eminent of the Prophet's companions and their scholars, thereby rendering it well-known to a degree of incontestability. Likewise, the Prophet's companions differed as to whether or not the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord on the Night of Ascension;[64] their differing indicates the logical possibility of seeing God, the exalted, for people of intellect differ only regarding the existence of what is possible, not of what is impossible.

وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ ﴾ يَدُلُّ عَلَى رُؤْيَةِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَبَّهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ ، فَإِنَّ أَهْلَ اللُّغَةِ اتَّفَقُوا عَلَى أَنَّ النَّظَرَ إِذَا تَعَدَّى بِكَلِمَةِ « إِلَى » يُرَادُ بِهِ رُؤْيَةُ الْعَيْنِ . وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُواْ لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِۦ ﴾ إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ ، وَاللِّقَاءُ هُوَ الرُّؤْيَةُ . وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُواْ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ ﴾ ذَكَرَ عَامَّةُ أَهْلِ التَّفْسِيرِ مَرْفُوعًا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ مِنَ الزِّيَادَةِ رُؤْيَةُ اللهِ تَعَالَى .

وَالْأَحَادِيثُ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ كَثِيرَةٌ ، وَأَشْهَرُهَا قَوْلُ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « إِنَّكُمْ سَتَرَوْنَ رَبَّكُمْ كَمَا تَرَوْنَ الْقَمَرَ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ لَا تُضَامُّونَ فِي رُؤْيَتِهِ » . وَفِي هَذَا تَشْبِيهُ رُؤْيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِرُؤْيَةِ الْقَمَرِ فِي التَّيَقُّنِ وَالْوُضُوحِ ، لَا تَشْبِيهُ الْمَرْئِيِّ بِالْمَرْئِيِّ . وَنَقَلَةُ حَدِيثِ الرُّؤْيَةِ أَحَدٌ وَعِشْرُونَ عَدَدًا مِنْ كِبَارِ الصَّحَابَةِ وَعُلَمَائِهِمْ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ ، فَيَكُونُ مَشْهُورًا بِحَيْثُ لَا يَسَعُ إِنْكَارُهُ . وَكَذَا اخْتَلَفَ الصَّحَابَةُ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ فِي أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ هَلْ رَأَى رَبَّهُ لَيْلَةَ الْمِعْرَاجِ أَمْ لَا ، وَاخْتِلَافُهُمْ يَدُلُّ عَلَى جَوَازِ رُؤْيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، لِأَنَّ الْعُقَلَاءَ إِنَّمَا يَخْتَلِفُونَ فِي وُجُودِ الْجَائِزِ لَا فِي وُجُودِ الْمُحَالِ .

From a solely rational perspective [without consideration of revelation], we affirm that the possibility of vision in the physical realm (*shāhid*) [lit., realm of what we perceive] arises only from existence and nothing else, and God, the exalted, exists; hence, He can be seen. The proof of this [major premise] is that in the physical realm, we see things of varying realities [or essences], such as particles; bodies; diverse colors, such as white and black; and various positions, such as movement and stillness. The reality of movement differs from that of stillness, each of which differs from whiteness and blackness, and accidents as a whole differ from particles and bodies. Hence, there must be a general characteristic shared by all, to which the possibility of being seen can be attributed, such that the allowing factor be consistently present in all of these and absent from those things that cannot be seen; no such trait exists save for existence itself.[65]

If it is said: We do not concede that things other than bodies can be seen; rather in our estimation, what is seen is *that* which moves or *that* which is still, not movement itself or stillness itself; the same applies to all accidents. We respond: A denial of seeing these accidents is a denial of the senses and of perception, since if movement and stillness were not seen, there would be no way to distinguish a moving body from a still one by means of sight, just as the distinction between hot and cold, or between sweet and sour, does not occur by sight, since such accidents are not seen. In reality, we do not doubt our ability to differentiate between the two states of movement and stillness in one physical body. And the means of knowledge are only the intellect, the senses, or a [true] narration. This knowledge is not derived by the intellect or a narration, leaving only the senses; it cannot be derived by smell, taste, touch, or hearing, leaving only sight.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ الْمَعْقُولُ نُثْبِتُ أَنَّ إِمْكَانَ الرُّؤْيَةِ فِي الشَّاهِدِ إِنَّمَا نَشَأَ مِنَ الْوُجُودِ لَا غَيْرُ، وَاللهُ تَعَالَى مَوْجُودٌ فَيَجُوزُ أَن يُرَى. وَدَلَالَةُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّا رَأَيْنَا فِي الشَّاهِدِ أَشْيَاءَ مُخْتَلِفَةَ الْحَقَائِقِ نَحْوَ الْجَوَاهِرِ وَالْأَجْسَامِ وَالْأَلْوَانِ الْمُخْتَلِفَةِ كَالْبَيَاضِ وَالسَّوَادِ وَالْأَكْوَانِ الْمُخْتَلِفَةِ كَالْحَرَكَةِ وَالسُّكُونِ، وَالْحَرَكَةُ بِحَقِيقَتِهَا تُخَالِفُ السُّكُونَ وَكِلَاهُمَا يُخَالِفَانِ الْبَيَاضَ وَالسَّوَادَ، وَالْأَعْرَاضُ بِجُمْلَتِهَا تُخَالِفُ الْجَوَاهِرَ وَالْأَجْسَامَ، فَلَا بُدَّ مِن وَصْفٍ عَامٍّ يَشْمَلُ الْكُلَّ لِيُحَالَ جَوَازُ الرُّؤْيَةِ إِلَى ذَلِكَ الْوَصْفِ لِتَطَّرِدَ الْعِلَّةُ وَتَنْعَكِسَ، وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا الْوُجُودُ.

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَا نُسَلِّمُ بِأَنَّ مَا سِوَى الْأَجْسَامِ مَرْئِيٌّ، بَلِ الْمَرْئِيُّ عِنْدَنَا الْمُتَحَرِّكُ وَالسَّاكِنُ لَا الْحَرَكَةُ وَالسُّكُونُ، وَكَذَا فِي سَائِرِ الْأَعْرَاضِ. قُلْنَا إِنْكَارُ رُؤْيَةِ هَذِهِ الْأَعْرَاضِ إِنْكَارُ الْحِسِّ وَالْمُشَاهَدَةِ، فَإِنَّ الْحَرَكَةَ وَالسُّكُونَ لَوْ لَمْ يَكُونَا مَرْئِيَّيْنِ لَمَا وَقَعَ التَّمْيِيزُ بَيْنَ الْمُتَحَرِّكِ وَالسَّاكِنِ بِحَاسَّةِ الْبَصَرِ، كَمَا لَمْ يُمَيِّزْ بِالْبَصَرِ بَيْنَ الْحَارِّ وَالْبَارِدِ وَالْحُلْوِ وَالْحَامِضِ، لَمَّا لَمْ تَكُنْ هَذِهِ الْأَعْرَاضُ مَرْئِيَّةً. وَتَحْقِيقُهُ أَنَّا لَا نَشُكُّ فِي عِلْمِنَا بِالتَّفْرِقَةِ بَيْنَ حَالَتَيِ الْحَرَكَةِ وَالسُّكُونِ فِي جِسْمٍ وَاحِدٍ. وَأَسْبَابُ الْعِلْمِ إِمَّا الْعَقْلُ أَوِ الْحِسُّ أَوِ الْخَبَرُ، وَهَذَا الْعِلْمُ لَيْسَ مِن بَابِ الْعَقْلِ وَقَدِ انْعَدَمَ الْخَبَرُ فَتَعَيَّنَ الْحِسُّ، وَيَسْتَحِيلُ حُصُولُهُ بِالشَّمِّ وَالذَّوْقِ وَاللَّمْسِ وَالسَّمْعِ، فَتَعَيَّنَ الْبَصَرُ.

If it is said: How can your position be true while many existent things cannot be seen? We respond: By our reasoning, we adhere to the *possibility* of seeing every existent thing, not its occurrence. Nothing exists save that it, in principle, can be seen; however, God, the exalted, has established the customary norm such that some existent things are not seen, due to a wisdom, but not because those things in and of themselves cannot be seen.

If it is said: If He can be seen, He would have to be in a certain direction in relation to the one seeing Him, as we have not seen anything in the physical realm except that it is in a particular direction in relation to us. We respond: Seeing means affirming something as it is, by means of the eye.[66] If the thing seen is in a [certain] direction [in relation to the seer], then it is seen *in a direction*; if it is transcendent above being in a direction, then it will be seen as such. Is it not true that we *know* of nothing in the physical realm save that it exists in a certain direction, yet we *know* that God, the exalted, is transcendent above directionality? This [issue] is no different. The evidence that we are correct is that God, the exalted, sees us while we are not in any direction in relation to Him; so likewise, we can see Him without His being in any direction in relation to us.

If it is said: If He can be seen, we would see Him now, as our eyes are not defective, and there is no veil over Him. We respond: Everything that can be seen is seen by us only if God, the exalted, creates the vision of it in our eyes; if He does not, we do not see it, even if it in and of itself can be seen, like a jinn that is seen by an insane person yet not by those around him. The Prophet ﷺ saw Gabriel ﷺ,

فَإِنْ قِيلَ كَيْفَ يَصِحُّ دَعْوَاكُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ الْمَوْجُودَاتِ لَا يُرَى ؟ قُلْنَا الْتَزَمْنَا بِهَذَا التَّعْلِيلِ جَوَازَ رُؤْيَةِ كُلِّ مَوْجُودٍ لَا وُجُودَهَا ، وَمَا مِن مَوْجُودٍ إِلَّا وَتَجُوزُ رُؤْيَتُهُ ، لَكِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى أَجْرَى الْعَادَةَ بِعَدَمِ رُؤْيَةِ بَعْضِ الْمَوْجُودَاتِ لِحِكْمَةٍ ، لَا لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِجَائِزِ الرُّؤْيَةِ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ كَانَ مَرْئِيًّا لَكَانَ بِجِهَةٍ مِنَ الرَّائِي ، فَإِنَّا مَا رَأَيْنَا فِي الشَّاهِدِ شَيْئًا إِلَّا وَهُوَ فِي جِهَةٍ مِنَّا . قُلْنَا الرُّؤْيَةُ إِثْبَاتُ الشَّيْءِ كَمَا هُوَ ، بِحَاسَّةِ الْبَصَرِ . فَإِنْ كَانَ الْمَرْئِيُّ بِجِهَةٍ يُرَى فِي جِهَةٍ ، وَإِنْ كَانَ مُنَزَّهًا عَنِ الْجِهَةِ يُرَى كَذَلِكَ . أَلَيْسَ أَنَّا مَا عَلِمْنَا شَيْئًا فِي الشَّاهِدِ إِلَّا وَهُوَ فِي جِهَةٍ مِنَ الْجِهَاتِ ، ثُمَّ عَلِمْنَا اللهَ تَعَالَى مُنَزَّهًا عَنِ الْجِهَاتِ ، فَكَذَا هَذَا . وَالدَّلِيلُ عَلَى صِحَّةِ مَا قُلْنَا أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يَرَانَا وَلَسْنَا بِجِهَةٍ مِنْهُ ، فَكَذَلِكَ نَرَاهُ وَلَا يَكُونُ بِجِهَةٍ مِنَّا .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ كَانَ مَرْئِيًّا لَرَأَيْنَاهُ فِي الْحَالِ ، إِذْ لَا خَلَلَ فِي أَبْصَارِنَا وَلَا حِجَابَ عَلَيْهِ . قُلْنَا كُلُّ مَا جَازَ رُؤْيَتُهُ إِنَّمَا نَرَاهُ إِذَا خَلَقَ اللهُ تَعَالَى رُؤْيَةَ ذَلِكَ الشَّيْءِ فِي أَبْصَارِنَا ، فَإِذَا لَمْ يَخْلُقْ لَا نَرَاهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ هُوَ مَرْئِيًّا فِي ذَاتِهِ ، كَالْجِنِّيِّ يَرَاهُ الْمَصْرُوعُ وَلَا يَرَاهُ مَنْ حَوْلَهُ ، وَالنَّبِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ رَأَى جِبْرِيلَ

yet his companions did not. An even clearer example is that a cat sees a mouse at night while we do not, due to what we said.

If it is said: If God, the exalted, can be seen, then either all of Him is seen or a part of Him, each of which is impossible. We respond: We counter with the issue of knowledge; is all of Him known or a part of Him, or is He not known in the first place? Every response of yours regarding knowledge is our response regarding sight. Moreover, we state that the division of something into a whole or a part is only possible for that which has a whole and a part, whereas it is impossible for God, the exalted, to be described in such terms; the division, then, is invalid.

ON VISION DURING SLEEP

Those [theologians] who affirm the vision of God differ as to whether it is possible or not during sleep. Some of them deem it impossible, since what is seen during sleep is [only] imagination or illustration, both of which are impossible as modes of apprehending the Eternal. Others deem it possible, [yet] without modality, direction, facing, imagination, or illustration; it is related from many of the early Muslims (*salaf*) that they saw Him in such a way.[67]

The point of view of this position is that there is no difference between sleep and wakefulness regarding that which in and of itself can be seen. This is because the viewer during sleep is actually only the soul or the heart; hence, [vision] is a type of beholding that occurs for the servant, as ʿUmar ﷺ stated, "My heart saw my Lord." And God is the One who guides.

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَلَمْ يَرَهُ أَصْحَابُهُ . وَأَوْضَحُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْهِرَّةَ تُبْصِرُ الْفَأْرَةَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَلَا نَرَاهَا ، لِمَا قُلْنَا .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ كَانَ اللهُ تَعَالَى مَرْئِيًّا إِمَّا أَن يُرَى كُلُّهُ أَوْ بَعْضُهُ ، وَكِلَا الْقِسْمَيْنِ مُحَالٌ . قُلْنَا نُعَارِضُكُمْ بِالْعِلْمِ : يُعْلَمُ كُلُّهُ أَوْ بَعْضُهُ ، أَوْ لَا يُعْلَمُ أَصْلًا ؟ فَكُلُّ جَوَابٍ لَكُمْ فِي فَصْلِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ جَوَابُنَا فِي فَصْلِ الرُّؤْيَةِ . ثُمَّ نَقُولُ قِسْمَةُ الْكُلِّ وَالْبَعْضِ إِنَّمَا يُتَصَوَّرُ فِيمَا لَهُ الْكُلُّ وَالْبَعْضُ ، وَاسْتَحَالَ اتِّصَافُ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِذَلِكَ ، فَلَا يَصِحُّ التَّقْسِيمُ .

فَصْلٌ

وَاخْتَلَفَ الْقَائِلُونَ بِجَوَازِ الرُّؤْيَةِ أَنَّ رُؤْيَتَهُ فِي الْمَنَامِ هَلْ تَجُوزُ أَمْ لَا . ذَهَبَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ إِلَى أَنَّهُ مُسْتَحِيلٌ ، لِأَنَّ مَا يُرَى فِي النَّوْمِ خَيَالٌ أَوْ مِثَالٌ ، وَكِلَاهُمَا عَلَى الْقَدِيمِ مُحَالٌ . وَجَوَّزَ ذَلِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ غَيْرِ كَيْفِيَّةٍ وَجِهَةٍ وَمُقَابَلَةٍ وَخَيَالٍ وَمِثَالٍ . وَحُكِيَ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ مِنَ السَّلَفِ أَنَّهُمْ رَأَوْهُ كَذَلِكَ .

وَوَجْهُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ مَا جَازَ رُؤْيَتُهُ فِي ذَاتِهِ لَا يَخْتَلِفُ بَيْنَ النَّوْمِ وَالْيَقَظَةِ . وَتَحْقِيقُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الرَّائِيَ فِي النَّوْمِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ الرُّوحُ أَوِ الْقَلْبُ ، فَيَكُونُ نَوْعَ مُشَاهَدَةٍ يَحْصُلُ لِلْعَبْدِ ، كَمَا قَالَ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ « رَأَى قَلْبِي رَبِّي » . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي .

ON DIVINE WILL

The People of Truth maintain that God, the exalted, wills, by an [attribute of] will (*irādah*) that is eternal and ascribed to His entity. It is an attribute that entails specification (*takhṣīṣ*) of actions with some qualities instead of others, in some time instead of another; [this view is] contrary to that of the philosophers[68] and esoterists. The Najjāriyyah claim that He wills by His entity, and the Muʿtazilites claim that He wills by an [attribute of] will that is temporal and that has no locus (*maḥall*).

Our proof in this issue are the Exalted's statements "God does whatever He wills" (3:40), "Verily, God judges as He wills" (5:1), as well as "If God wills harm for me, can they remove His harm; or if He wills mercy for me, can they hold back His mercy?" (39:38), among other verses in which He explicitly mentions divine choice (*mashīʾah*) and will. Also, both of them are one and the same according to Sunni orthodoxy and mainstream consensus (*ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāʿah*), contrary to the Karrāmiyyah, who claim that choice is eternal, while will is temporal. This is a false viewpoint as it contradicts statements of the early Muslims (*salaf*) and entails abandonment of scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*). Also, he who wills (*murīd*) is the one to whom will is ascribed; hence, one must adhere to the position of eternal will ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted, lest He be deemed a locus of temporal things.

القَوْلُ فِي الْإِرَادَةِ

ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ إِلَى أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى مُرِيدٌ بِإِرَادَةٍ قَدِيمَةٍ قَائِمَةٍ بِذَاتِهِ ، وَهِيَ صِفَةٌ تَقْتَضِي تَخْصِيصَ الْمَفْعُولَاتِ بِوَجْهٍ دُونَ وَجْهٍ وَوَقْتٍ دُونَ وَقْتٍ ، خِلَافًا لِلْفَلَاسِفَةِ وَالْبَاطِنِيَّةِ . وَزَعَمَتِ النَّجَّارِيَّةُ أَنَّهُ مُرِيدٌ بِذَاتِهِ ، وَزَعَمَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ أَنَّهُ مُرِيدٌ بِإِرَادَةٍ حَادِثَةٍ لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ .

وَحُجَّتُنَا فِي ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ ٱللَّهُ يَفۡعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴾ وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحۡكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴾ ، وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ إِنۡ أَرَادَنِيَ ٱللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلۡ هُنَّ كَٰشِفَٰتُ ضُرِّهِۦٓ أَوۡ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحۡمَةٍ هَلۡ هُنَّ مُمۡسِكَٰتُ رَحۡمَتِهِۦۚ ﴾ إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ الَّتِي صَرَّحَ فِيهَا بِالْمَشِيئَةِ وَالْإِرَادَةِ . وَكِلَاهُمَا وَاحِدٌ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ إِلَّا الْكَرَّامِيَّةَ ، فَإِنَّهُمْ زَعَمُوا أَنَّ الْمَشِيئَةَ أَزَلِيَّةٌ وَالْإِرَادَةَ حَادِثَةٌ ، وَهُوَ قَوْلٌ بَاطِلٌ لِمَا أَنَّهُ خِلَافُ أَقَاوِيلِ السَّلَفِ وَالْخُرُوجُ عَنِ الْإِجْمَاعِ . وَالْمُرِيدُ مَنْ قَامَتْ بِهِ الْإِرَادَةُ ، فَلَزِمَ الْقَوْلُ بِقِيَامِ الْإِرَادَةِ الْقَدِيمَةِ الْقَائِمَةِ بِذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى لِئَلَّا يَصِيرَ مَحَلًّا لِلْحَوَادِثِ .

As for logical evidence, it is not rationally impossible for things that occur with certain qualities and at certain times to occur with different qualities and at earlier or later times, in light of the power of God, the exalted, to cause things to exist. So were it not for divine will, which necessitates the specification of those things with those qualities and at those times, they would not exist *as such*. Moreover, if will were absent from the entity of God, the exalted, He would be compelled (*majbūr*) in the initiation of the universe, as there is no intermediary between compulsion and will, or between coercion and choice. The compelled one, of course, is impotent (*ʿājiz*).

The opinion of the Muʿtazilites, that He wills with a temporal will that is not in a locus, is absurd, for such a will then came into existence either by the creative act of God, the exalted, or by itself. If one says [it originated] by itself, that entails denial of the Creator; if one says [it originated] by the creative act of God, the exalted, then we ask if He created it with His will or without it. If one says [God created it] without it, then He would have been compelled to create it; if one says [God created it] with His will, we would ask if that will is eternal or temporal. If one says [it is] eternal, then that is what we too affirm; if one says [it is] temporal, then the same question is posed again ad infinitum. And God is the One who guides.

وَأَمَّا الْمَعْقُولُ وَهُوَ أَنَّ مَا يُوجَدُ مِنَ الْمُحْدَثَاتِ بِمِقْدَارِهَا فِي أَوْقَاتِهَا لَا يَسْتَحِيلُ فِي الْعَقْلِ أَن يَقَعَ عَلَى خِلَافِ ذَلِكَ الْقَدْرِ وَأَن يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ الْوَقْتِ بِالنِّسْبَةِ إِلَى قُدْرَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِي إِيجَادِهِ ، فَلَوْلَا وُجُودُ الْإِرَادَةِ الَّتِي تُوجِبُ تَخْصِيصَهَا بِذَلِكَ الْقَدْرِ وَالْوَقْتِ لَمَا وُجِدَتْ كَذَلِكَ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْإِرَادَةَ لَوِ انْتَفَتْ عَنْ ذَاتِ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَكَانَ مَجْبُورًا فِي إِيجَادِ الْعَالَمِ ، إِذْ لَا وَاسِطَةَ بَيْنَ الْجَبْرِ وَالْإِرَادَةِ وَبَيْنَ الِاضْطِرَارِ وَالِاخْتِيَارِ ، وَالْمَجْبُورُ عَاجِزٌ .

وَقَوْلُ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ إِنَّهُ مُرِيدٌ بِإِرَادَةٍ حَادِثَةٍ لَا فِي مَحَلٍّ قَوْلٌ بَاطِلٌ ، فَإِنَّ تِلْكَ الْإِرَادَةَ لَا تَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ حَدَثَتْ بِإِحْدَاثِ اللهِ تَعَالَى أَوْ بِذَاتِهَا ، فَإِنْ قَالَ بِذَاتِهَا فَهُوَ تَعْطِيلُ الصَّانِعِ ، وَإِنْ قَالَ بِإِحْدَاثِ اللهِ تَعَالَى إِيَّاهَا فَنَقُولُ أَحْدَثَهَا بِإِرَادَةٍ أَمْ بِغَيْرِ إِرَادَةٍ ؟ إِنْ قَالَ بِغَيْرِ إِرَادَةٍ يَكُونُ مَجْبُورًا فِي إِحْدَاثِهَا ، وَإِنْ قَالَ بِإِرَادَةٍ نَقُولُ تِلْكَ الْإِرَادَةُ قَدِيمَةٌ أَمْ حَادِثَةٌ ؟ إِنْ قَالَ قَدِيمَةٌ فَهِيَ الَّتِي نُثْبِتُهَا ، وَإِنْ قَالَ حَادِثَةٌ يَعُودُ السُّؤَالُ إِلَى أَن يَتَسَلْسَلَ . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي .

Annotations to *The Existence and Attributes of God*

1 In his seminal theological work *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, Imam al-Nasafī begins with a lengthy exposition of the definition of temporal knowledge, citing the opinions of several Mu'tazilites and Ashʿarīs and identifying the flaws of their definitions. He concludes the section with two Māturīdī definitions: "an attribute of a living entity by which ignorance, doubt, opinion, and forgetfulness are negated," or as can be gleaned from the writings of Imam al-Māturīdī himself, "an attribute by which something considered [or brought to mind] is made apparent to the one who possesses it [the attribute]." Imam al-Nasafī deems the latter definition as sound and free of possible objections. See Abū al-Muʿīn Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hüseyin Atay (Ankara: Ri'āsat al-Shu'ūn al-Dīniyyah, 1993), 9–19.

2 Throughout this text, the word *eternal* is used for the Arabic term *qadīm*, which could also be translated as "eternal without start" or "pre-eternal," since the Arabic word *qadīm* is derived from a root word that connotes "prior to." However, the word *eternal* is used here since the directionality of being before creation is only from the vantage point of creation; what is eternal has no temporal order of before or after, for it is outside of time, or atemporal. Its contradictory term is *temporal* (*ḥādith*), meaning that which is in

time and has a beginning, or that which enters into existence, or that which occurs.

3 The significance of this opening section on epistemology cannot be underscored enough in light of competing post-Enlightenment epistemologies. Empiricism, logical positivism, and scientism are seen from the vantage of traditional kalam as reductionist and self-refuting, given that no such epistemology can be ascertained through its own framework of knowledge.

Regarding scientism—the view that only science can provide accurate and reliable knowledge of anything—contemporary philosopher Edward Feser demonstrates four problems it faces, the first of which is that scientism is self-defeating: *science* cannot verify that science is the only form of rational inquiry nor that it is even a form of rational inquiry. The scientific enterprise itself presupposes numerous metaphysical assumptions that science cannot prove, such as the very existence of an objective world outside the minds of scientists, the notion that features of the world can in principle be discovered, and the notion that human perception and intellect accurately correspond to those features. The latter principle shows the incoherence of naturalistic theories that contend that humans are the product of macroevolution from non-human species, based solely on processes such as natural selection. Based on those theories, the human brain/mind is only the result of random cumulative biological events that themselves are selective for and naturally oriented toward survival. Hence, based on that view, there is no guarantee that the mind *accurately discovers* and *accurately depicts* features of the objective world; rather, those evolutionary theories guarantee only that the human mind is best suited for human survival. It may very well be that *inaccurate* depictions of the world foster greater survivability and that thus the mind has evolved to provide inaccurate depictions. If so, all human theories, including naturalistic theories of human macroevolution, are inherently suspect and cannot be presented as truth claims.

The second problem of scientism, according to Feser, is the descriptive limits of science, given that its foundational methodology is to abstract from nature only what is mathematically quantifiable (and thus susceptible to prediction and control), leaving out the qualitative aspects of reality. By definition, the method of scientific inquiry does not allow qualitative features into scientific description in the first place, but it does not show that such features have no extra-mental existence. The fact that physics *abstracts* data from the world demonstrates that there is more "out there" from which the abstract is drawn.

The third flaw of scientism Feser identifies is the explanatory limits of science. Science's mode of explanation appeals to laws of nature, yet science does not define what laws of nature are, how they work, or where they come from (and in principle *cannot*, since such questions are philosophical by nature). Moreover, laws of nature *presuppose* matter that is subject to those laws; hence, by definition, an appeal to the laws of nature cannot account for the existence of matter. And, if proponents of scientism respond that such questions cannot be answered by any mode of inquiry, that response is itself a philosophical stance and would thus require philosophical justification.

The last problem Feser notes is the weakness of a common argument for scientism—namely, that it must be true in light of the unrivaled predictive and technological success of modern science. If the predictions of physics are so accurate, and if the technological power that it unleashes is so potent, then its underlying methods must also be reliable. Thus, its description of reality must be complete, so science is the only genuine source of knowledge. Feser uses an analogy to show how this argument is a non sequitur: because metal detectors are far superior to anything else in finding metallic objects, what metal detectors reveal to us is most likely all that is real. To be sure, the immense predictive and technological feats of modern physics do not signify that physics identifies all of reality.

Metaphysics does not produce new technology, nor is it expected to. But it alone is capable of answering the fundamental big questions that science assumes and that scientism takes for granted. See Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (Heusenstamm Ger.: Editiones Scholasticae, 2014), 9–24. For a discussion about the incoherence of macroevolutionary theories of human origin, see Nuh Ha Mim Keller, *Sea Without Shore: A Manual of the Sufi Path* (Beltsville, MD: Amana, 2011), 350–64.

4 Preempting the response of skeptics and relativists who deny or doubt knowledge attained by the five senses, the Māturīdī scholars considered sense data to be self-evident and necessary and hence without need of logical proof of its veracity. See al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 9.

5 In other words, all narrations by true prophets are factual, and a true prophet is one whose claim to prophecy is supported by a prophetic miracle, which is defined as a clear interruption in God's normal pattern of creating things—one that is inimitable (such that no other can perform the like) and is granted to someone who claims to be a prophet sent by God, the exalted. The inferential reasoning is that God's granting of the supernatural and inimitable miracle to such an individual is akin to God's statement "My servant is truthful in all that he conveys from Me." So, if the narrations of true prophets were not factual, that would entail that God lied—exalted is He above that—given that He had confirmed their authenticity with the miracle, and confirming the authenticity of a liar is itself a form of lying (*taṣdīq al-kādhib kadhib*). Lying, of course, is logically impossible for God, the exalted, since divine statements correspond with divine knowledge, so the perfection of divine knowledge is necessarily mirrored in the perfection of divine statements. The entire context of this reality evinces how the divine confirmation *through act*—granting the supernatural miracle to someone claiming prophethood, coupled with rendering all opponents incapable of

replicating its like—is equivalent to an explicit divine statement of confirmation. As the Ashʿarī shaykh Muḥammad al-Hāshimī (d. 1381/1961) explains, the divine act here translates to a divine statement of confirmation—based on convention (*waḍʿ*); on the customary way God, the exalted, creates things (*ʿādah*); and on overall context (*qarīnat al-ḥāl*)—such that "the individual of divinely granted success (*muwaffaq*) finds no difference whatsoever between God's confirming the authenticity of prophets with this divine act and His doing so with an explicit statement." See Muḥammad al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah fī sharḥ ʿaqīdat ahl al-sunnah* (Damascus: Abnā' Muḥammad ʿAdnān Rābiḥ al-Jazā'irī, 1928), 201–3.

With respect to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his truthfulness is established for his companions by the accompanying miracles they directly witnessed (as sense data), and for all of humanity thereafter by the incontestable multiple-chain transmission (*tawātur*) of those miracles, the greatest of which is the Qur'an, the lasting miracle. Every single verse of the Qur'an meets the criterion of multiple-chain transmission, and therefore the Qur'an by itself is sufficient evidence of his prophethood. And although the majority of his other miracles are related through single-chain reports (*āḥād*), each of which when assessed by itself falls short of the categorical nature of multiple-chain transmission, they together signify one common phenomenon—namely, the contravention of laws of nature at his hands. As such, this *single, shared phenomenon* is effectively related through multiple-chain transmission, resulting in epistemological certainty.

6 This statement is by no means inciting Muslims to violence; rather, it is using an extreme example to show the absurdity of the claims of the sophists, who if subjected to pain would admit both the reality of the pain as well as their knowledge of it. As Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī notes, the sophists could not survive on earth without recognizing the existence of realities such as food, shelter, clothing, warding off harm, and the like. A logical rebuttal

of their sophistry is to point out that their position of denying reality (or its knowledge) is itself an absolute, a position that presupposes both its reality and their knowledge of it. This rebuttal is valid against both skepticism and relativism, since adherents of each position deem their position an absolute that they know. Hence, as Imam al-Nasafī asserts, there is consensus among people of intellect on the reality of things and on the human ability to correctly perceive things. See al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 20–23.

7 Such groups denied that narrations grant knowledge—meaning certainty—but instead considered them to provide only likelihood. The reason for their view is a perceived disparity of certainty between (1) self-evident axioms, such as one being half of two, and (2) knowledge gained from narrations conveyed through incontestable transmission, such as the existence of Alexander the Great. Imam al-Taftāzānī retorts, "We state that this is false. Rather, disparity is possible among types of necessary knowledge [such as (1) and (2) above, each of which results in certainty] based on the disparity of one's familiarity, custom, and experience; of what occurs to one's mind; and of conceptions of a statement's subject and predicate." That is to say, those who familiarize themselves with the nature of historical transmission and give it sufficient thought and reflection will arrive at a conviction regarding narrations conveyed through "incontestable multiple-chain transmission" (*khabar mutawātir*) that is comparable to their conviction that one is half of two. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 55–56.

8 Imam al-Māturīdī explains their resemblance to the sophists in that the sophists deny reality, despite their denial being a reality for them, while the Buddhists and Brahmins, who deny narrations, put forth their position only by narration (namely, their verbal statement of denial), whereby they have—as it were—denied their denial. See Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed.

Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammed Aruçi (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2007), 70.

Imam Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī adds that denial of the narration renders useless human speech and hearing, because these faculties have no real value for humans aside from speaking and comprehending *narrations* (that is, statements). Moreover, narrations on the whole are either probabilistic or definitive, and Sunnis affirm only the latter as a source of certain knowledge. Definitive narrations are of two types, mentioned in the text above. The existence of other sorts of narrations that are probabilistic does not undermine the certainty of definitive narrations. See al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 25.

9 As Imam al-Māturīdī mentions, such a denial would entail a person's ignorance of his own name along with the names of his relatives and, in fact, the name of *anything*, as language is known only by way of narration—in particular, this applies to multiple-chain transmissions. See al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 70.

10 Imam Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī notes that the validity of logic corresponds to human nature: self-evident knowledge is simply undeniable, while deductive reasoning is innately recognized by humans as a sound means of knowledge, as people are predisposed to using logic when faced with mental challenges that are not solved by use of the five senses or by self-evident principles. Additionally, Imam al-Nasafī points out a profound irony in *any* argument against the validity of logic [including the one cited above in *Al-Bidāyah*], in that the argument will itself make use of logic in the attempt to refute it; hence, even those who deny the validity of logic implicitly affirm its validity. Therefore, logical reasoning is valid by consensus of people of intellect. And, specifically with respect to the argument cited above in *Al-Bidāyah*, Imam al-Nasafī adds that another factor that often precludes sound reasoning by logicians is "to pass judgment regarding certain premises by one's personal whim or prejudice (*hawā*) rather

than by one's intellect (ʿ*aql*), whereby one arrives at opinion yet deems it to be knowledge [that is, factual]. But, if one instead fulfills all the requisites of deductive reasoning for each premise and conclusion and knows its validity, it will not result in error, and one's reasoning cannot be invalid without exception." See al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 27–31.

11 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 13 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 1:405; Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim bi sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Muslim*, 6 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2006), 2:32–34. Imam al-Bukhārī's wording is "I have not seen ones deficient in intellect and religious practice that are more capable of dissuading a prudent man's mind than one of you." (For a concise explanation, see annotation 13.)

12 This is an allusion to the Qur'anic verse "And if there are not two men, then a man and two women from among those you approve as witnesses, so that if one of the two errs, the other may remind her" (2:282).

13 The author uses this prophetic report (hadith) as evidence of general intellectual disparity among people (irrespective of gender or other classifications), a philosophical view that can be proven by various means and is plainly evident to all students and educators. One does not have to consider women as intellectually inferior to men in order to believe in intellectual disparity among people.

With respect to the actual report (see annotation 11), the Prophet ﷺ explained the reason for his statement, which is that the legal court testimony of two women counts for that of one man and that women do not pray or fast during menstruation. In light of that clarification, contemporary Islamic scholar Gibril F. Haddad notes that the statement was a figure of speech—namely, a synecdoche (*majāz mursal*), where a whole is used for a part ("intellect" for specific legal testimony, and "religious practice"

for specific worship at the time of menses). Indeed, the context of the report suggests that the statement was not literal, since the Prophet ﷺ was being playful with the female citizenry of his community, encouraging the wealthy and astute among them to donate generously as a civic responsibility.

Haddad also notes that the context of the Qur'anic verse—witnessing the recording of debts—indicates that the ruling of dual female testimony signifies not an inherent mental deficiency in women but a sociological or cultural phenomenon—namely, that women in premodern Arabian society played a less prominent role than men in the public sphere of financial transactions (even though Islam granted them full rights to own property). This interpretation is supported by the fact that in contexts in which women had more prominent roles, Islamic law holds that the testimony of one woman is sufficient, such as the testimony of a female doctor or midwife at birth, which, in the case of distinguishing between fetal and infant death, could often have serious financial implications through inheritance law. See Gibril F. Haddad, "Women's Intelligence Hadith Again," *Living Islam*, last modified January 7, 2009, https://www.livingislam.org/k/wiha_e.html.

With respect to their mental capacity, though, it is clear from the Prophet's life and teaching that he acknowledged, valued, and relied on the judgment of women. Examples abound. Upon receiving revelation, he turned to his wife Khadījah ﷺ (d. 3 BH/619) for support, counsel, and wisdom; he continued to rely on her intellectual and emotional fortitude during his prophetic career, for the gravest of matters, until her death. At Ḥudaybiyyah, he turned to his wife Umm Salamah ﷺ (d. 59/679) for advice during a very tense situation and accepted her wise counsel to personally leave the pilgrim state (*iḥrām*) as an example for his troubled companions. His wife ʿĀ'ishah ﷺ (d. 58/678) was one of the most prominent scholars and teachers among the Prophet's companions: she was one of fewer than ten companions who

gave legal verdicts (*fatāwā*), and she was particularly renowned for her astounding memory of prophetic reports and pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. As one of only seven companions who related more than a thousand hadith, she personally taught the 2,210 hadith that she related from the Prophet ﷺ to over 150 men. (Incidentally, narrating hadith and issuing legal verdicts represent the most significant forms of testimony in religion, given that they comprise much of the religion's very content.)

Throughout the Prophet's life, many women asserted themselves and voiced strong opinions on ethical and political matters, which the Prophet ﷺ listened to and often followed. Women in Islam were economically empowered, through both inheritance rights and general rights, to own and manage property. A salient example of women's political enfranchisement in Islam is that any female member of the Muslim community could grant safe passage and asylum to an enemy, even during wartime. The Prophet's daughter Zaynab ﵂ (d. 8/629) granted asylum to her former husband, Abū al-ʿĀṣ ﵁ (d. 12/633), who had come to Medina as a polytheist from the hostile Meccan community that had waged war against Medina, and she made a public announcement in the Prophet's mosque at the start of the dawn prayer, informing the community of her grant of protection. Similarly, at the Conquest of Mecca, the Prophet's female companion Umm Hāni' ﵂ granted security to some polytheists who had just engaged in combat against a group of his companions, and the Prophet ﷺ recognized her political act and forbade anyone from fighting those polytheists.

The Qur'an itself is clear on the noble status of women, shattering unjust pre-Islamic notions, such as women being the property of men or even a source of sin, and underscoring their strength and equality with men in the eyes of God, the exalted. Rather than a gender- or class-based hierarchy, the radical new Qur'anic hierarchy was spiritual, based solely on faith, piety, and virtue (see, for example, 4:1 and 33:35). Particular Qur'anic

examples of saintly women include Āsiyah ﵍, the wife of Pharaoh, who exemplified reliance on God, the exalted, in the face of her oppressive husband; Mary ﵍, the mother of Prophet Jesus ﵇, who embodied the perfection of chastity and piety; and Bilqīs, the Queen of Sheba, who demonstrated political acumen as a head of state, coupled with the requisite humility to accept the call of Prophet Solomon ﵇ to monotheism. While pre-Islamic Arabia dishonored women to the extent of condoning female infanticide (see, for example, 16:58–59), Islam inaugurated a profound reconfiguration of societal rank rooted in the human spirit and in virtue; rendered the life, property, honor, and reputation of women as sacred and inviolable; and liberated women through intellectual, socioeconomic, and political empowerment.

14 Following Aristotle, medieval Arab Neoplatonist philosophers instead affirmed a primordial matter (*hyelo*, Ar. *hayūlā*), which together with form (*morphe*, Ar. *ṣūrah*) comprises all contingent existence. According to the distinguished Māturīdī theologian Imam al-Farhārī (d. 1239/1824), the basis of their hylomorphism was that (1) possibility (*imkān*) is an existential attribute (*ṣifah wujūdiyyah*), since its opposite is impossibility, which is nonexistential (*ʿadamī*); (2) an existential attribute must be ascribed to something existent, that being self-evident; and (3) anything contingent is possible before its occurrence, since by definition it cannot be necessary or impossible. Therefore, every contingent thing in the world must be preceded by an existent substrate in which the accident of its possibility subsists, and that substrate is matter. Matter itself, however, cannot be preceded by its own substrate, for otherwise there would be an infinite regress of substrates. Thus, matter, as the substrate of all contingent possibilities, must be eternal. Matter must also necessarily obtain through some form, so the composites of matter and form (namely, corporeal bodies) are also eternal. Hence, those philosophers deemed the universe itself to be without beginning, a position that according to Sunni orthodoxy entails disbelief (and not mere

heresy), even though they did affirm the divine as the One from whom eternal matter emanated. They also denied bodily resurrection, affirming the resurrection of only souls, since the eternal by definition cannot accept nonexistence, and, according to them, matter (with form, as body) is eternal. So, if the underlying substrate of material existence cannot leave existence, it cannot be resurrected from nonexistence.

The Sunnis, however, affirmed the indivisible particle as the fundamental constituent of the universe and, as such, adopted a type of atomism uniquely indigenous to the Islamic scholastic tradition. These atoms (or more accurately, particles) are temporal and hence finite, as are the accidents that must subsist in an atom for it to exist. Moreover, time is also composed of discrete instants, and accidents do not on their own last two instants. As such, it is only God, the exalted—with His omnipotent power and in correspondence to His divine will—who creates particles along with their accidents, who holds particles together in any body, and who re-creates the accidents (and therefore, body) in each subsequent instant of the body's subsistence. God, the exalted, as such, is absolutely free in His will and uncompromised in His power, which reigns sovereign in creating all things and all events in the universe. The universe is finite in its past and was thus created ex nihilo, and bodies along with souls shall be resurrected.

The Sunni response to the presuppositions of hylomorphism was that possibility is not an existential attribute but a metaphysical consideration (*amr iʿtibārī*) and, as such, itself has no real extra-mental existence. Indeed, if possibility had actual existence, its existence would be either necessary or possible, the former entailing that all contingent possibilities be regarded as intrinsic necessities, which is patently false, and the latter resulting in an infinite regress of possibilities. So, by affirming atomism instead of hylomorphism, the Sunnis were able to philosophically defend the creed inherited from and agreed upon by the early

Muslims, including the finitude of the universe with its corollary of creation ex nihilo, bodily resurrection in the afterlife, and the absolute sovereignty of God's will and omnipotent power. See Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās sharḥ sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id* (Istanbul: al-Āstānah, n.d.), 86–87.

Of course, the primary concerns of Sunni scholastics were doctrinal, so as to preserve the aforementioned tenets of faith. A hylomorphism that posited a beginningless universe or a universe of causative natures that themselves engender change could not square with an authentically Islamic monotheism, which can be demonstrated on its own terms as rational, coherent, and even logically necessary in light of other deductive arguments. In terms of the natural world, however, a type of hylomorphism *can* be affirmed, so long as none of those tenets is denied. That is, from the vantage of how God, the exalted, makes the world manifest to human minds and from the vantage of the patterns of His creative fiat, the two principles of matter and form can be affirmed without compromising Sunni doctrine. Some philosophers argue that those principles prove useful and at times necessary to account for the human ability to know things, to abstract universals, and to pursue natural science. The scientist can use hylomorphism for a surface-level reading of the world and still affirm atomism as a deeper reading of reality. What is perceived as matter when observing things can ontologically be composed of finite and temporal particles. Likewise, the scientist can make use of the causal nexus between things to predict and theorize, all the while realizing that God, the exalted, alone creates things and their perceived effects, and that true causation is only from divine creation. The causal nexus is affirmed at the surface-level vantage used in science, while from the vantage of absolute reality/ontology/metaphysics, the causal nexus is recognized only as evincing the divine patterns of activity, which are regular but not necessary, and amenable to miraculous interruption if God, the exalted, so chooses. The scope of divine omnipotence is thus

uncompromised, and the world is still affirmed as categorically dependent in every moment and finite in its past.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that the bifocal vantage used here, which accommodates both an immediate, experienced, surface-level reading of the world (sometimes called *sharīʿah* or *ḥikmah* in classical Islamic literature), as well as a deeper, more absolute vision of reality (alternatively called *ḥaqīqah* or *qudrah*), is a critical hermeneutic employed by Sunnism in resolving apparent antinomies in theology, such as that of "free will versus predestination" and the like. Free will is affirmed as real and genuine from the vantage of human experience (*sharīʿah/ḥikmah*), for it is immediately and necessarily known by the individual, while predestination is affirmed from the vantage of ultimate reality (*ḥaqīqah/qudrah*), in light of a creedal tenet that is demonstrated both rationally and scripturally—namely, that God, the exalted, knows, wills, and creates every particular in the universe, which includes human voluntary acts. Through the former lens, human agency and thus human legal and moral responsibility are confirmed, while, through the latter lens, the divine attributes of knowledge, will, and power are affirmed, without compromise or limitation of the scope of their associations.

15 Some might object that both a mustard seed and a mountain are *potentially* infinitely divisible, as mathematically any dimension can be divided in half. Yet this still does not prove the *actual* infinite divisibility of either, which is what is denied above. As the contemporary Christian philosopher William Lane Craig states, "For the claim that a substance is, say, potentially infinitely divisible does not entail that the substance is potentially divisible *here* and *here* and *here* and.... Potential infinite divisibility (the property of being susceptible of division without end) does not entail actual infinite divisibility (the property of being composed of an infinite number of points where divisions can be made)" (William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], 93).

To summarize, Sunni atomic theory holds that every substance is contingent, exists in time, and is therefore finite—it must fundamentally be both spatially finite in composition and temporally finite in duration. Indeed, ontic space-time itself must also be composed of finite units. For more detail, see "The Finitude of Ontological Time" in appendix A.

16 Imam al-Taftāzānī notes that these arguments are essentially weak, since the philosophers who are addressed did not assert that bodies are composed of an actually infinite number of particles but that bodies are not composed of particles in the first place. A body, according to them, is but one whole thing, while Sunnis hold that a body is an aggregate of indivisible particles held together by God's omnipotent power. However, al-Taftāzānī notes that the philosophers' arguments, comprising mostly geometrical proofs, are also weak. (For details, see Adi Setia, "Atomism Versus Hylomorphism in the Kalām of al-Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: A Preliminary Survey of the *Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyyah*," *Islam and Science* 4, no. 2 [Winter 2006].)

For this reason, the renowned Ashʿarī Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī inclined toward suspending judgment on the issue, while Imam al-Bayḍāwī (d. 719/1319), another prominent Ashʿarī, maintained that the fundamental atoms/particles are *actually* indivisible, yet *conceptually* divisible. (This corresponds with the explanation of William Craig cited in annotation 15.) See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 84–87.

17 This proof is based on certain necessities of accidents, denial of which caused some philosophers to fall into absurdity and contradiction. They are as follows: (1) accidents exist "in addition to" substance; (2) they cannot exist without substance; (3) they cannot transfer between substances; (4) they cannot be dormant within a substance; (5) they exist concurrently with substances, for no substance can exist without some accidents; (6) they are not eternal, only to later not exist, for the eternal must (by

definition) be *necessarily* existent and hence cannot *not* exist; and (7) there cannot be an infinite regress of accidents. See Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bājūrī (d. 1276/1860), *Tuḥfat al-murīd ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Shannār (Damascus: Maktabat Dār al-Bayrūtī, 2002), 108–9.

18 That is, the temporal is that which enters into existence subsequent to its prior nonexistence, or that which is "originated."

19 Throughout this text, the terms *necessary* (*wājib*), *impossible* (*mustaḥīl*, or *muḥāl*), and *possible* (*mumkin*, or *jā'iz*) are used in their philosophical sense, meaning that which is metaphysically or rationally so (*ḥukm ʿaqlī*). A metaphysical/rational necessity is that whose negation entails either contradiction or denial of what is rationally self-evident: examples are "A body occupies space," "A body is either still or moving [from the same vantage point]," and "God, the exalted, is eternal." A metaphysical/rational impossibility (or logical absurdity) is that whose affirmation entails either contradiction or denial of what is rationally self-evident: examples are affirming a body as neither still nor moving (from the same vantage point) and affirming a partner for the divine. A metaphysical/rational possibility is that whose affirmation and negation are each free of contradiction and of denial of what is rationally self-evident: examples are "a body is still" and "a body is moving." These rulings are not derived from patterns of physical existence in this world or from imagination. They deal solely with logical principles—such as the law of identity (x is x), the law of excluded middle (either x or not-x), and the law of non-contradiction (x is not not-x, at the same time and from the same vantage point)—and with self-evident principles, such as "The whole is greater than the part." Any attempt to reject these principles itself presupposes them in its argument against them, since all rational deliberation is grounded in identity, excluded middle, and non-contradiction.

These logical rulings are fundamentally distinct from physical/empirical rulings (*ḥukm ʿādī*) of necessity, possibility, or impossibility, which relate merely to the normal way things occur in the world. The effects related to laws of nature—such as an object falling to the ground when released, cotton burning upon contact with fire, and satiation after eating—are physically/empirically necessary but metaphysically/rationally *possible*. Muslim scholastics define an empirical ruling as "the affirmation of a connection (*rabṭ*) between two things ... by means of empirical evidence (*takrār*), while also affirming that the two things are fully separable (*infikāk*) and that there exists no actual causal relationship (*ta'thīr*) whatsoever between the two." Sunni orthodoxy holds that actual causality belongs to God, the exalted, alone: it is only His act, in accordance with His will, that causes the existence of anything rationally possible. See al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 250–51.

20 The above argument, called the *kalam cosmological argument*, is an apodeictic proof (or demonstration, Ar. *burhān*) for the existence of God, the exalted. For a detailed exposition, see appendix A.

21 The author ends this and subsequent sections of the book with such supplications or maxims. The term *enablement* (*tawfīq*) refers to God's act of creating obedience in the human being, corresponding to the person's free will and choice. The author concludes each section with such a prayer so as to attribute his success to God, the exalted, rather than to himself, as well as to apprise readers that one's success in understanding the material will come about only by the help and power of God, the exalted, even while one must take the means and exert oneself in study.

22 Throughout this text and other Māturīdī works, the designation "People of Truth" refers to Sunni orthodoxy (a discussion of which is found in the introduction). See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 25.

23 The former view refers to Christian Trinitarian doctrine, while its specific wording of "the third of three" is taken from Qur'an 5:73. The latter view does not denote Trinitarianism but rather deification of Mary ﷺ (e.g. 5:116), as evinced historically in tendencies of popular piety to worship Mary as "mother of God." It might also have been a heresy of some pre-Islamic Christian Arabs, as Edward Gibbon (d. 1794) notes, "The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism: their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East: the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, and saints, and angels, the objects of popular veneration; and the Collyridian heretics, who flourished in the fruitful soil of Arabia, invested the Virgin Mary with the name and honours of a goddess" (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Abridged Edition*, ed. David Womersley [London: Penguin Books, 2005], 615).

24 The author's statement is based on the principle that one's affirmation of an entity is valid only if one's conception of that entity is accurate; hence, those who ascribe partners to the Creator fail to validly affirm Him. However, this viewpoint does not negate that Muslims, Christians, Jews, and adherents of other religions worship and affirm *the same God*—the creator of the universe. For example, *Allāh* in Arabic does not refer to a deity different from *God* in English, as Christian Arabs use the name *Allāh* in their devotion. For more detail, see Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, "One God, Many Names," *The Oasis Initiative*, accessed January 16, 2020, https://www.theoasisinitiative.org/one-god-many-names. For a Christian rejoinder to the false notion that Muslims worship an altogether different deity than do Christians, see Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response* (New York: HarperOne, 2012).

25 The phrase "If it is said," followed by "We respond," represents a form of anticipatory argument and refutation that was standard for such dialectical manuals.

26 In the classical kalam literature, this proof is termed "the demonstration against mutual cooperation or prevention" (*burhān al-tawārud wa al-tamānuʿ*). It is a reductio ad absurdum argument found in the Qur'an itself, as God, the exalted, states, "Had there been therein gods besides God, the two [that is, the heavens and earth] would have been corrupted" (21:22), with "corrupted" interpreted by many theologians as "nonexistent." The verse articulates a hypothetical conditional syllogism whose consequent is denied by observation, as we directly perceive the existence of the cosmos, not to mention its marvels and wonders, resulting in the conclusion that no deity or creator exists besides God, the exalted. The basis of the syllogism is that the notion of two or more deities entails logical absurdity: either (1) the two would concur in their decision, and concurrence (a) if simultaneous, would entail the absurdity of two causes for one effect, (b) if successive, would entail the absurdity of causing an already existent effect, or (c) if by "division of labor," would entail inability of each deity with respect to the portion of the other; or (2) the two would disagree in their decisions, which (a) if together executed, would entail the conjoining of two opposites, or (b) if just one were executed, would entail the inability of the other deity. The only other logical possibility would be (3) a "truce" of sorts, which is logically absurd in light of the *rank* of divinity (namely, *absolute dominion*), as alluded to in the Qur'anic verse "God took no son whatsoever, and there is no god along with Him. Had it been otherwise, each god would [alone] go forth with what it creates, and some therefore would *dominate* others. So Glory be to God above what they attribute to Him!" (23:91). See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 153–55.

The argument implies the universal will and universal power of a deity, without limitation of (or exception to) the scope of divine will and divine power. This is because any inability, even for a single particular, is in direct contravention of the implications of divinity. The universal scope of divine will and power is logically necessary, as otherwise, a specifying determination (*takhṣīṣ*)

would have been made upon the deity by another entity, which would entail that the deity were temporal and thus caused, in which case it would not be a deity. So because an eternal and necessarily existent cannot be the object of a specifying determination, the eternal and necessarily existent Creator must perforce be one and unique.

To summarize: The mere existence of the cosmos, which is temporal and only *possibly* existent, is categorical evidence of its Creator, for it is self-evident that no temporal occurrence can be uncaused. And its Creator must be eternal and necessarily existent; otherwise, one falls into the absurdity of either circular reasoning or infinite regress (see appendix A for more detail). Because the Creator is eternal and necessarily existent, He cannot be the object of a specifying determination, for only something temporal can be specified with a limit. So God's divine attributes of will and power must be of universal scope, without limitation or exception. Hence, the Creator must also be one, since a second deity can be shown to lack ability and choice in many conceivable scenarios.

27 For a succinct, cogent presentation of how Trinitarianism is an unsubstantiated doctrine from a biblical lens, see Timothy Winter, "The Trinity is Incoherent," in *Debating Christian Theism*, ed. J. P. Moreland, Chad Meister, and Khaldoun A. Sweis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 347–57.

Winter does not pursue the argument that Trinitarianism is a metaphysical impossibility (though that argument is sound and coherent) but instead argues that the doctrine is untenable on two internal criteria of Christianity: (1) the doctrine's salvific import, coupled with its incomprehensibility, and (2) the original conception of monotheism espoused by Jesus ؑ himself and the apostolic generations. Regarding the first criterion, while catechisms such as the Athanasian creed (*Quicunque vult*) restrict eternal salvation to those who have faith in the Trinity and "think of" it, the doctrine today is conspicuously absent from a great

number of Church worship songs, liturgies, and even sermons to the masses, while a fair number of clergy members admit to lacking confidence in it. For much of the general Christian laity, Trinitarianism simply proves unintelligible, and its obscurity has led to many Christians falling into what their official creeds deem to be heresies: embracing either outright polytheism by affirming three gods (thus fully squaring the circle), or a unitarian monotheism that rejects the divine status of Christ ﷺ (and thus circling the square). The former outcome can hardly be seen as a gospel ("good news") providentially brought by the Holy Spirit, while the latter outcome would, according to Christian orthodoxy, preclude salvation in the hereafter.

Regarding the second criterion, fair examination reveals Trinitarianism to be incompatible with what Christ ﷺ and his followers themselves believed, for a central theme of the New Testament is that they firmly espoused Jewish monotheism. Winter notes, "Despite the desire of many to interpret the disparate Biblical data in compliance with the classical creeds, it is evident that the classical Trinitarian proof-texts were identified only after centuries of disputation. It is significant that the best known, 1 John 5:7–8, which is the only clearly Trinitarian passage, is also the best-known instance of forgery in the Bible, being absent from the oldest Greek manuscripts" (348). Indeed, Jesus ﷺ at times denies any part of divinity: "The son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing" (John 5:19). And, as for the description "son of God," only Roman pagan cults used the term to denote inheriting divinity from a divine father; the Aramaic and Hebrew milieu of the New Testament lacked any such implication, using the term instead for angels, rabbis, inspired men or messiahs, and worldly kings. The Jews around Christ ﷺ, informed by their clear monotheism, would simply not have understood the term to imply a sharing in divinity, a notion that instead betrays Hellenistic or Roman pagan influence. Undoubtedly, as Winter asserts, "The idea of a

perichoretic union of self-aware hypostases, each of which was entirely God, came later" (349). The Roman councils were bound within ancient Greek models of thought, and it can be argued that integrating a triune conception of God made the new religion appealing to many gentiles.

The synoptic Gospels in particular—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—evince a Jewish teacher ﵇ bringing a message of Jewish monotheism. The Gospel of John, though, while not containing explicit Trinitarian belief, does have passages that suggest many first-century Christians ascribed some sort of divinity, or union with the divine, to Jesus ﵇. Winter argues that, even if it is conceded—for the sake of argument—that statements such as "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30) accurately reflect what Jesus ﵇ said, the firmly monotheistic setting in which they were ostensibly uttered must inform their interpretation. In that light, such statements, rather than implying actual partnership in divinity, would instead have been understood to signify a level of proximity to the divine, rooted in deep mutual love between creature and Creator. This notion is common to many traditions, Islam being no exception. Imam al-Bukhārī relates that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, speaking on behalf of God, the exalted, describes such a rank with the words "My servant draws near to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him. And My slave continues to draw nearer to Me with optional acts of devotion until I love him. And when I love him, I am his ear with which he hears, his eye with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot on which he walks [Winter's translation]" (350). Termed *wilāyah* (sainthood, or loving friendship with God, the exalted) in Arabic, this rank was never construed by the monotheists around Muḥammad ﷺ as implying a sharing in divinity, despite the paradoxical language of God, the exalted, becoming the servant's ear, eye, hand, and foot. It was self-evident that God, the exalted, could not literally become flesh or have a partner in divinity. The same context

must be recognized with respect to any ambiguous statements allegedly spoken by Christ ﷺ, since Christ's Jewish audience certainly shared in that self-evident knowledge regarding the absolute oneness of the divine. Love, however, is often best expressed through metaphor. And, like all prophets, Jesus ﷺ was undoubtedly a most loving servant of God, the exalted, and among God's most beloved servants, but he was a man, nevertheless, who called fellow men to such love, rooted in a simple and clear worship of the one true God.

28 Whenever the term *universe* is used in this text, what is meant is the entire cosmos—that is, all that exists other than God, the exalted. Philosophically, it refers to the totality of metaphysical possibilities that actually exist.

29 He is Abū Muḥammad Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, a theologian who resided in Baghdad, engaged in much scholastic debate, and was the shaykh of the Twelvers of his time. An author of many works, he died around the year 190/805. See Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām: Qāmūs tarājim li ashhar al-rijāl wa al-nisāʾ min al-ʿarab wa al-mustaʿribīn wa al-mustashriqīn*, 8 vols., 17th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li al-Malāyīn, 2007), 8:85.

30 Bekir Topaloğlu, editor of the Ankaran publication of *Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, notes that the author Imam al-Ṣābūnī states in his larger work *Al-Kifāyah fī al-hidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn* (of which the above text *Al-Bidāyah* is a summation—see Introduction),

> As for raising the hands toward the sky during supplication, it is just like facing the direction of the qiblah during ritual prayer. Moreover, its significance is that the treasures of provisions for servants have been placed in the heavens. God, blessed and exalted, says, "And in the heavens is your sustenance and that which you have been promised" (51:22). Likewise, the angels that descend with provisions for servants do so from the heavens, and the human being is naturally inclined to turn toward the

> direction from where he is expecting what he seeks. This is similar to a ruler who promises provisions to his soldiers, due to which they all physically turn toward the vaults that store the provisions, despite being fully certain that the ruler himself is not located inside those vaults. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 13r.)

(Hereafter, translations of Topaloğlu's Arabic annotations will be followed by [BT].)

31 The distinguished Māturīdī theologian Imam al-Lāmishī explains,

> The proof of the People of Truth [against anthropomorphism] is what we have mentioned [of the metaphysical impossibility of divine temporality]. And they have no evidence in scripture, since those verses [whose outward meaning suggests anthropomorphism] are "ambiguous texts" (*mutashābihāt*) whose apparent, literal meanings contradict what is known by reason as absolute and certain.... Interpreting those verses as literal also contradicts the verse that is clear and unambiguous (*muḥkamah*, pl. *muḥkamāt*)—namely, "There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him" [Qur'an 42:11]. So holding fast to the apparent, literal reading of those verses invariably leads to contradiction and discrepancy in God's proofs, exalted be He. And God, the exalted, is all-wise: His proofs and evidence have no discrepancy, since discrepancy and contradiction in one's evidence indicates foolishness and ignorance, and God is transcendent above that.
>
> Therefore, either (1) we refrain from designating their specific meanings, as is related from many of our eminent masters, who said, "We believe those verses were revealed, yet we refrain from designating their meanings" [this being the general method of earlier Muslim scholars (*salaf*)] or (2) each ambiguous text is interpreted appropriately, based on a valid linguistic meaning of the word or phrase in question [this being the general method of later Muslim scholars (*khalaf*)], as is also related from some of our masters, who said, "There are various possible meanings of these words, so they must be interpreted with a meaning that

> corresponds with what is categorically known through reason and with the clear and unambiguous verse [42:11], so that there is no contradiction in God's proofs."
>
> For example, the word *yad* (lit. "hand") linguistically can be used to signify blessing, power, or authority; or proof; or ease and wealth; or the physical limb. Similarly, the word *ʿayn* (lit. "eye") could linguistically mean protection or the physical organ. So each term would have to be interpreted in a manner that does not conflict with what is known with certainty by reason or known unambiguously from revelation.

Imam al-Lāmishī goes on to explain how the hadith corpus is not evidence for anthropomorphic readings, since, in addition to being subject to this same hermeneutical criterion, prophetic narrations that fall short of incontestable multiple-chain transmission (*āḥād*, as opposed to *mutawātir*) do not result in categorical certainty, which is the epistemological level required in matters of creed. See Maḥmūd b. Zayd al-Lāmishī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd li qawāʿid al-tawḥīd*, ed. ʿAbd al-Majīd Turkī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1995), 58–59.

Imam al-Farhārī notes,

> These texts are termed "ambiguous [texts]" (*mutashābihāt*), which Sunni scholars have historically approached in two ways *after their consensus that the outward meaning is not intended*. The first approach, held by most early scholars (*salaf*), is to have faith in what God intended and to consign knowledge of that to Him, while affirming divine transcendence above corporeality and above resemblance to creation.... The second is the approach of later scholars (*khalaf*), which is to interpret them in a manner suitable for the divine; [this approach was adopted] due to the prevalence of corrupt views in their time and due to the misguidance of general Muslims caused by the anthropomorphists. Hence, their aim was to safeguard the religion.
>
> According to some scholars of verification (*muḥaqqiqūn*), this difference in approach is based on the exegesis of the verse, "He is

the One who sent down upon you the Book: some verses are definitive (*muḥkamāt*)—they are the very foundation of the Book—and others are ambiguous. So those in whose hearts is misguidance seek out what is ambiguous of it, desiring thereby strife and desiring its interpretation. Yet none knows its [true] interpretation except God, and those firmly rooted in knowledge: they say, 'We believe in it; all of it is from the presence of our Lord'" [3:7]. [The two exegetical opinions regarding the end of this verse are (1) the term "those firmly rooted in knowledge" is the subject of a new sentence: "And those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it'"; thus, based on the prior sentence, only God can know the true interpretation of ambiguous verses; or (2) the term "those firmly rooted in knowledge" is not the subject of a new sentence, but rather part of the exception in the prior sentence: "Yet none knows its [true] interpretation except God and those firmly rooted in knowledge." Thus, expert scholars can also know the correct interpretation of ambiguous verses.]

So the interpretation of the *salaf* [regarding this verse] is to stop at the name of God, based on the view that interpretation of ambiguous verses is known to God alone; this view is supported by the alternative recital of Ibn ʿAbbās, "And those firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it,'" as related by al-Ḥākim [d. 405/1014]. The exegetical opinion of the *khalaf* [regarding this verse], though, is one of conjunction between "those firmly rooted in knowledge" and the name of Supreme Majesty; this view is supported by the statement of Ibn ʿAbbās [d. 68/688] "I am among those who know its interpretation," as related by Ibn al-Mundhir [d. 318/930]. Scholars of this view deem the reproach of "seeking to interpret ambiguous verses" [in 3:7] as pertaining specifically to those who interpret them based on their heretical doctrines (*bidʿah*), such as the anthropomorphists. (*Al-Nibrās*, 120)

32 The author provides a more detailed examination of the Muʿtazilite position in *Al-Kifāyah*, where he states, "The Muʿtazilites deny that His attributes are qualities other than His

entity [that is, that He has attributes other than His entity], and claim instead that He is knowing without knowledge, powerful without power, hearing without [the attribute of] hearing, seeing without sight, and so on for the remaining attributes. Exceptions are speech and will, for they admit that those are affirmed qualities other than the divine entity yet claim that they are temporal and not ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted." He also states,

> The Muʿtazilites maintain that what can be affirmed or negated is of "attributes of action," such as the statement "He created a child for so-and-so but did not create for so-and-so" or "He provided wealth for Zayd but did not provide for ʿAmr." But what cannot be negated is of "attributes of entity," such as knowledge and power. One would not say, "He did not know such-and-such" or "He was not able to do such-and-such." Will and speech, then, can be affirmed or negated. God, the exalted, says, "God wants ease for you; He does not want difficulty for you" (2:185), "God indeed spoke to Moses" (4:164), and "God will not speak to them on the Day of Arising" (2:174). Therefore [according to them], [will and speech] are from the attributes of action, and hence are both temporal. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 26v, 14r. [BT])

33 For example, if one says about a person, "He is strong," one intends thereby to ascribe the attribute of strength to the person's entity. The speaker is not suggesting that "strong" is the individual's proper name.

34 This position represents a median position of classical Sunnism between two theological pitfalls: one of equating God's attributes with His very entity (*ʿayn al-dhāt*), a logical conundrum that is by implication a denial of real attributes, and the other of considering God's attributes as separable from His entity (*ghayr al-dhāt*), which entails temporality of the divine due to possible separation or change, or which allows for a multiplicity of eternals. Yet either implication (temporality or multiplicity of the eternal) is logically untenable. Rather, according to Sunni theology, God's attributes

are *neither His very entity nor separable from it*. They are eternal attributes ascribed to His entity: they are not identical to His entity since they are real attributes, and an attribute must by definition be distinct from the entity to which it is ascribed, yet they are not separable from His entity, since eternal ascription by necessity precludes change or separation. The Muʿtazilites erred on this issue by denying God's affirmative attributes altogether, out of fear of multiplicity of eternals, to which the Sunnis responded that multiplicity is entailed only if there are multiple *entities*, or one entity yet with *separable attributes*, neither of which is affirmed in Sunnism. Rather, the Sunni doctrine of divine attributes affirms *multiple, inseparable attributes eternally ascribed to the singular entity of God*, a fully monotheistic assertion of the one, unique, timeless divine being who possesses life, knowledge, will, power, speech, hearing, and sight. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 137–46; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 192–95.

Many Christians also erred on this issue by conceptually allowing for the separability of divine attributes, which led to a severe compromise of monotheism and to deification of other than God, the exalted. As Imam al-Dusūqī (d. 1230/1815) explains,

> [Many] Christians believe that God is a substance (*jawhar*) composed of three hypostases (*uqnūm*, pl. *aqānīm*): a hypostasis of existence, which they called the Father; a hypostasis of knowledge, which they called the Son; and a hypostasis of life, which they called the Holy Spirit. What they mean by hypostasis is an attribute, and by substance an entity. They claim that the hypostasis of knowledge, which they deem a part of the divine, transferred to the body of our Master Jesus ﷺ and admixed with him, whereby divinity (*lāhūt*) united with humanity (*nāsūt*). And how foolish they are, for they claim that knowledge is a deity, existence is a deity, and life is a deity; then the three hypostases together became one deity. So they affirmed a contradiction—namely, between unity and multiplicity. And they deemed the divine entity, which they considered substance, to

be *composed of* attributes, which they considered accidents. And they considered a part of the divine to transfer to our Master Jesus ﷷ. Lastly, they assigned to the hypostases names that have no suitability. (Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿArafah al-Dusūqī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Dusūqī ʿalā sharḥ umm al-barāhīn* [Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1939], 86)

5 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 1:70, 10:513.

6 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ et al., 52 vols., 2nd ed. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 2008), 6:246–49.

7 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

> Some scholars maintain that there are three types of names: (1) the very thing being named, like the names Thing, Entity, and Existent; (2) neither the thing being named nor other than it, like the names Knower and Powerful; (3) other than what is named, such as the names Creator and Provider. This disagreement is based on the issue of whether God's names are eternal or temporal—those who deem the name other than the named maintain that they are temporal; those who categorize the names maintain that some are temporal and others are eternal; those who consider the name to be the very thing being named maintain that they are eternal, without exception. This issue stems from the issue of His attributes.
>
> To proceed, we must proffer a short introduction by which the reality of the disagreement can be understood. There are four terms: naming (*tasmiyah*), the named (*musammā*), the name (*ism*), and the one who names (*musammī*). So when a person says, "God," then this statement is naming, an act of the one who named; by agreement, it is other than the name and other than the one being named. Naming is to mention (*dhikr*) the name; the disagreement, then, is if mentioning the name of God constitutes remembrance of God or remembrance of other than God. Those who deem the name to be other than the named maintain that if one

says, "God," he has made remembrance of other than God, for he mentioned the name of God, and His name is other than Him." (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 18r. [BT])

38 And glorification is suitable only for His entity, not for other than Him. See al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 18r. [BT]

39 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

> If one states: It is narrated about the Prophet ﷺ that he said, "Verily, God has ninety-nine names. Whoever enumerates [and comprehends] all of them shall enter paradise." So were the name and the named one and the same, the one named would also be ninety-nine. We would respond: The term *name* can be used to mean "naming," which is ascribed to the one who names, which by consensus is other than the named. So enumeration, multiplicity, and temporality all return to the naming, not literally to the name. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 18v. [BT])

40 This statement is related by Ibn Samʿānī (d. 562/1167) in the addendum to *Tārīkh Baghdād*, with a chain of narrators that includes someone unknown (*majhūl*), up to the Prophet ﷺ through ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ؓ; as well as by al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) in his exegesis (*tafsīr*) as a statement of Muṭarrif b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 95/714) and Yazīd b. Murrah al-Jaʿfī. Imam al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) also relates it from Muṭarrif; while al-Daylamī (d. 558/1162) relates it without a chain of narration, yet through Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ to the Prophet ﷺ, as saying, "The best of actions are those that are moderate and balanced," in a hadith that starts with, "Be consistent in performing your obligations." It is also related that Imam al-Awzāʿī (d. 157/774) said, "There is nothing God has commanded save that the devil opposes it with two tendencies, not caring whichever one he succeeds in inciting: excess (*ghuluww*) and shortcoming (*taqṣīr*)." Imam al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) notes that the principle of moderation is confirmed by the Qur'an, as in 17:29, 17:110, 25:67, and even by allusion in 2:68. See Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasanah fī bayān*

kathīr min al-aḥādīth al-mushtahirah ʿalā al-alsinah, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Ṣiddīq (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1991), 205–6.

41 He is Abū Miḥraz Jahm b. Ṣafwān from Samarqand, a client (*mawlā*) of Banī Rāsib and head of the sect that would be called the Jahmiyyah. Imam al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) calls him "a misguided heretic who died in the time of the young followers (students of the Prophet's companions—*tābiʿūn*). He had planted seeds of immense evil." He worked for the army of al-Ḥārith b. Surayj (d. 128/746), who led a revolt against the Umayyad governor Naṣr b. Sayyār (d. 131/748). Upon the order of the latter, he was executed in the year 128/745. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:141.

42 In classical Islamic theology, the word *shay'* refers only to *mawjūd*, or "that which exists."

43 Imam al-Lāmishī explains their position as follows:

> The Qarāmiṭah, many of the philosophers, Jahm b. Ṣafwān, and others state, "These terms [Existent (*mawjūd*, *shay'*), Living (*ḥayy*), Knowing (*ʿālim*), Able (*qādir*), etc.] may not be ascribed to God, the exalted; likewise, any name that may be ascribed to other than God, the exalted, may not be ascribed to Him, the exalted, so as to avoid affirming resemblance [between God and His creation]."
>
> We [Sunni orthodoxy] respond: This is absurd, for the term *shay'* refers only to "existence," and there is no equivalence whatsoever between God, the exalted, and other than Him with respect to existence, for the existence of God, the exalted, is *necessary* while the existence of all others is merely *possible*.
>
> Likewise, there is no equivalence at all between the life of God, the exalted, and the life of other than Him, for His life is eternal, not an accident, and its continuity is not impossible; while the life of all others is temporal and an accident, and its continuity is impossible. So equivalence between the two is false, and there is no resemblance without equivalence.
>
> This is the case for all the divine attributes [affirmed by Sunni orthodoxy], so resemblance between God and His creation is

> not entailed in the affirmation of these names and attributes for God; thus, our position by no means entails affirmation of resemblance. (*Kitāb al-tamhīd*, 67–68)

44 The position of the author (and of Imam al-Ashʿarī himself) appears to affirm resemblance between two things (such as two entities or two attributes) only when all of their qualities are similar. Yet later theologians (such as Imam Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī) note that this is logically incoherent, for it entails that no two things could ever resemble one another, since some quality of each, however minor or irrevelant, would be unique to it and absent in the other. For example, two scholars of equivalent knowledge of jurisprudence would not resemble one another in light of each scholar's unique physical traits and personality. Thus, according to Imam al-Taftāzānī, Imam al-Farhārī, and others, the position of Imam al-Ashʿarī and Imam al-Ṣābūnī is interpreted to mean that resemblance between two things is affirmed only when all of their *relevant qualities that are under consideration* are identical, even if other qualities (that are irrelevant to what is being considered) are not shared by both things. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 120–22.

This interpretation is reflected in Imam al-Ṣābūnī's explanation in the text. At bottom, the Sunni affirmation of the divine names and attributes does not entail resemblance of God, the exalted, to creation due to the absolute and categorical difference (*tabāyun*) between what is necessary/eternal (God, the exalted, and His attributes) and what is possible/temporal (creation and its attributes). And, in light of that categorical difference, some theologians hold the view that any terms that are used for both God, the exalted, and His creation (such as existence, life, knowledge, power) are used as homonyms (*ishtirāk lafẓī*). Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hāshimī comments,

> Realize that the position of Shaykh al-Ashʿarī is that the term *existence* [or *being* (*wujūd*)], when used for what is eternal and for what is temporal, is a homonym.... So there is no universal/general existence of which eternal existence and temporal existence

are particulars/types.... Rather, according to [al-Ashʿarī], eternal existence is categorically different (*mubāyin*) from temporal existence, as is evident from the categorical difference between their innumerable respective properties, some of which are as follows: God's existence is without beginning or end, while the existence of all else is preceded by and followed by nonexistence [or nonbeing (*ʿadam*)]; God's existence is metaphysically necessary and its negation entails impossibility, based on both reason and scripture, while the existence of all else is metaphysically possible, the negation of which entails no impossibility whatsoever; God's existence is not bound or conditioned by time and space, for He is the creator of time and space, while the existence of all else is necessarily bound by both; God's existence alone is not dependent whatsoever on anything, while the existence of all else is ever dependent on His power and will, at its inception as well as for its continuity (according to the correct view). So were it not for His largesse and favor upon all things in the cosmos, of granting them existence (*ījād*), they would never have existed. And were it not for His largesse and favor upon them of continually maintaining their existence in every moment (*imdād*), their being would at once vanish into nonbeing, for in each moment they are innately accepting nonbeing. [*Ijād* is the divine act of bringing into existence, while *imdād* refers to the continued divine sustainment that follows *ījād*.] Ibn ʿAṭā' Allāh [d. 709/1309] states in his aphorisms, "There are two blessings that no [temporally] existent thing is without and that everything in the cosmos necessarily needs: the blessing of God's [initial] act of granting existence and the blessing of God's unceasing acts of maintaining in existence"; "He [the exalted] blessed you initially with [His act of] granting you existence and subsequently with [His acts of] unceasingly maintaining you in existence."

This [reality] is what it means for the existence of all things other than God to be preceded by and followed by nonexistence, and for nonexistence to be possible for them in each of their moments, which is why they always [without interruption] need the ontic

support of their Creator's power. And this is the proper exegesis of the Qur'anic verse "Every single thing is perished (*hālik*), except His [God's] countenance" (28:88)—that is, perished constantly in all of its moments: *actually* perished before its current moment of existence [its past] and after its current moment of existence [its future], and *effectively* perished in its present moment of existence [since were it not for the divine *imdād*, the thing on its own would be nonexistent]. And the term *thing* here is general to encompass everything in the cosmos....

This is also the proper interpretation of the [rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*)] hadith [related in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī] "The truest statement a poet ever uttered is the statement of Labīd: Verily, everything other than God is unreal (*bāṭil*)"—that is, unreal without interruption ([actually unreal] in its past, [effectively unreal] in its present, and [actually unreal] in its future), as we just explained regarding the verse. (*Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 97–98)

45 Historically, the issue of divine speech was among the most debated in Islamic theology; according to some scholars, this is why the discipline was given the name *kalam*. The Sunnis regarded their view as another median position, in this case, between various misunderstandings over the nature of the Qur'an. The main tension was over reconciling the revealed *temporal* word with the *eternality* of its revealer: God, the exalted, is timeless, so His attributes must also be timeless, yet the Qur'an—which is His speech—is in certain aspects clearly in time, such as its words and letters, to which we have direct access. The anthropomorphist tendency (extreme Ḥanbalism, or pseudo-Ḥanbalism) led to ascribing eternality to the very words and sounds, clearly a logical absurdity, while the tendency of misplaced rationalism (Mu'tazilism) led to affirming temporality and createdness to God's speech, in all its aspects, thereby resulting in denial of a divine attribute (eternal divine speech).

In the eyes of its scholars, Sunnism avoided both extremes by asserting that the reality of speech is not words or sounds but

rather signification of meaning (*dalālah*). This reality (termed *internal speech*, or *kalām nafsī*) can logically be eternal, since that entails no contradiction; while words and sounds (termed *verbal speech*, or *kalām lafẓī*) must necessarily be temporal. Hence the letters and sounds of the Qur'an are created, for they are observably in time. Yet the Qur'an itself is not created, because its words indicate God's eternal attribute of speech. So in light of the Qur'anic text's *indication of a divine uncreated attribute*, the Qur'an as a whole is deemed "the uncreated speech of God"—despite its words being composed of letters, revealed in time, recited as sounds, and written as script. The divine attribute that its words indicate, or point to, is God's eternal *speech*, an uncreated attribute ascribed to God's entity and therefore transcendent above temporality of any sort, such as order, declension, composition into whole or parts, syntax, grammar, break, renewal, change, silence, absence, or the like (all of which do pertain, however, to the *words* of the Qur'an). Rather, God's eternal speech is a timeless divine attribute of *signification*, which is the reality of speech, and signification is not logically bound to time and space. That signification is associated with all things necessary, possible, and impossible. In other words, all that God, the exalted, eternally knows with His attribute of knowledge, He eternally signifies with His attribute of speech.

As for the manner by which the created words of the Qur'an indicate God's uncreated attribute of speech, Sunni scholars mention two types of indication: (1) an "indication [or pointing] of words to their meanings" (*dalālah waḍʿiyyah lafẓiyyah*), in that the words of the Qur'an indicate some of the meanings also indicated by the divine attribute of speech, and perhaps more accurate, (2) an "indication of logical concomitance" (*dalālah ʿaqliyyah iltizāmiyyah*), in that just as spoken words logically indicate that their speaker has life, so do the words of revealed scripture indicate that the Revealer has speech.

And because of this indication—that is, because the created text (*kalām lafẓī*) points to the timeless divine attribute (*kalām nafsī*)—it is prohibited and unacceptable to say "the Qur'an is created," lest someone misconstrue the statement to mean that the *divine attribute of speech* is created. This is why, when the Mu'tazilite 'Abbāsid caliph al-Ma'mūn instituted the notorious Inquisition (*miḥnah*), coercing scholars to say "the Qur'an is created," the imams of *ahl al-sunnah* refused to accede: many used misleading words or dissimulation under threat; Imam al-Bukhārī fled and supplicated God, the exalted, that he be allowed to die before being captured, and he died after four days; Imam ʿĪsā b. Dīnār (d. 212/827) was imprisoned for twenty years; and Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was imprisoned and tortured.

The only situation wherein one may say "the Qur'an is created" is in educational settings, since the details of the issue may be explained properly. And the denotation of terms would also need explanation, as the term *Qur'an* denotes both the created text and the uncreated attribute, most often the former, while the term *divine speech* (*kalām Allāh*) denotes both meanings as well, yet most often the latter.

Due to the potential misunderstanding, the Sunni position is that "the Qur'an is the uncreated speech of God" (*al-Qur'ān kalām Allāh ghayr makhlūq*), with exactly that wording. In fact, Imam al-Taftāzānī relates that theologians prohibited saying even "the Qur'an is uncreated" (without explanation), "lest one misunderstand and think the actual letters and sounds are eternal, as the [extreme] Hanbali scholars imagined out of their ignorance or obstinacy" (*Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 160).

Verses that attribute movement (and thus temporality) to scripture, such as "Verily, We sent it down on the Night of Power and Decree" (97:1), are understood to refer to the words of the Qur'an. Both the words of the Qur'an and their meanings were sent down, for the words were directly from God, the exalted, not from Angel Gabriel ﷺ nor from the Prophet ﷺ. God, the exalted,

created the text first in the preserved tablet; then sent it down in scrolls to the lowest heaven on the Night of Power and Decree (*laylat al-qadr*), in a place called the House of Glory (*bayt al-ʿizzah*); then sent it down upon the blessed Prophet ﷺ gradually over his prophetic career, sections at a time, in relation to specific circumstances.

Thus did the Sunnis reconcile this salient tension in Islam and, in their estimation, preserve both logical soundness (*ʿaql*) and what was inherited from the early Muslims regarding revelation (*naql*)—namely, that the Qur'an is "the uncreated speech of God," yet revealed in time and space, recited on tongues, preserved in hearts, and written in script, such that its very recitation is worship and its shortest chapter (*sūrah*) is inimitable, leaving detractors powerless to replicate its like. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 152–71; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 176–80, 223–26; ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Ṭālib al-Ghunaymī al-Maydānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah*, ed. Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ and Muḥammad Riyāḍ al-Māliḥ (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), 68.

46 That is, while God, the exalted, creates blackness and whiteness and movement and stillness in His creation, it does not follow that God Himself is black or white, or moving or still—exalted is He above any physical traits. Rather, the locus wherein He creates a trait is perforce the entity to which that trait is rightfully ascribed.

47 This is how Sunni theologians define affirmative attribute (*ṣifah thubūtiyyah*)—namely, as a quality ascribed to an entity (*maʿnā qā'im bi al-dhāt*). Of course, human attributes are contingent temporal accidents, while divine attributes are eternal and ascribed to the entity of God, the exalted. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 155.

48 Or more commonly in English, "There is something I want to tell you," or "I would like to have a word with you," etc.—all meaning

that the person has speech within him that he would like to communicate to the other person.

49 It appears that the author uses "what is recited" here to mean "what is *signified* by the recitation," since otherwise "what is recited" would mean the actual words, which cannot possibly be eternal and uncreated. The author himself rebukes the Hanbali scholars in the text above for their opinion that the Qur'anic letters are uncreated, since letters are clearly temporal, possessing order and position, and coming into and out of existence. Hence, his statement "what is recited" evidently refers not to the *words* of the Qur'an but to the divine attribute of speech *signified* by what is recited, and the divine attribute is of course eternal and uncreated.

50 He is Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl b. Isḥāq al-Ashʿarī, descendant of the Prophet's companion Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī ﷺ and eponym of the Ashʿarī theological school. He initially studied in the Muʿtazilite school of Basra under its leader Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/916) and excelled therein, until publicly renouncing its divergent views and embracing what would later be termed Sunnism. A prolific writer, he is said to have authored some three hundred works. He died in the year 324/936. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 4:263.

51 He is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Fūrak al-Anṣārī al-Aṣbahānī, master of juristic principles and theology, Shafi'i jurist, and eminent scholar of the Ashʿarī school. After studying in Iraq, he moved to Nishapur and built a school there. An author of close to one hundred works, he died in the year 406/1015. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 6:83.

52 He is al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Bāqillānī, judge, extraordinary theologian, and leading figure in the history of the Ashʿarī school. A scholastic of outstanding intellect and a prolific writer, he resided in Baghdad and

died in the year 403/1013. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 6:176. When the title *al-Qāḍī* (the Judge) is used by itself in scholastic manuals of theology, it normally refers to him.

53 He is Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Mihrān al-Isfarāyīnī, eminent Ashʿarī theologian and scholar of law and juristic principles. He used to engage in scholastic debates with the Muʿtazilites. He died in the year 418/1027. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 1:61. When the title *al-Ustādh* (Adept Scholar or Master) is used by itself in scholastic manuals of theology, it normally refers to him.

54 He is Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī, one the greatest imams of theology and eponym of the Māturīdī theological school. He authored works in Qur'anic exegesis, theology, and other sciences. He died in the year 333/944. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 7:19. See Introduction for more detail.

55 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

> The upshot of the discussion is that the Qur'an does not mention that Moses ﷺ *heard* the speech of God, but rather only that God spoke to him, as it states, "God indeed spoke to Moses" (4:164), and "His Lord spoke to him" (7:143). Furthermore, in another verse, God restricts to three levels His speaking to His servants, for He states, "It is not fitting for a human to be spoken to by God except by revelation; or from behind a veil; or that He send a messenger who reveals, by His permission, whatever He wills" (42:51). God negates His speaking to humans except by means of revelation, from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger. There is no doubt that His speech by means of revelation pertains not to hearing, since revelation refers to the casting of meaning into the heart in a hidden manner, as He states, "And We revealed to the mother of Moses" (28:7) and "And your Lord revealed to the bees" (16:68). Likewise, speech by way of sending a messenger does not mean that one hears the one who sends the messenger;

rather, the voice of the messenger is heard, while that signifies the speech of the one who sends him. Hearing, therefore, would pertain to the signification of divine speech, not to divine speech itself. As for speech from behind a veil, the intermediary of sound and letters is necessary, as He states, "So when he came to it, he was called from the edge of the blessed valley, in the blessed land" (28:30). What is meant by "veil" is for the tree to be a locus for the existence of sound and letters that signify the speech of God, the exalted, for His statement "Verily, I am God" cannot be the speech of the tree itself; rather, it is the speech of God. Yet it is heard from the tree; hence, the tree, the letters, and the sounds are together an intermediary for understanding the speech of God, the exalted. What is heard is the signification of the speech, not the speech itself. The specification of Moses ﷺ as "the one spoken to by God" (*kalīm Allāh*) is based on the fact that he was singled out as being the recipient of this type of speech. It would not be far-fetched, though, if one were to call this "speech without intermediary," meaning that there is no intermediary [in the form] of a book or messenger, not that there is no intermediary of sound or letters. For example, it is said in common parlance, "The ruler spoke to so-and-so by mouth without an intermediary." By that statement, they do not mean that there were no letters and sounds; rather, they intend to say that he did not send a book or messenger but rather spoke to him directly. This issue is similar. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, L 25v–26r, ʿA 60r. [BT])

56 Imam Abū al-Barakāt Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310) states, "Know that the terms *act of creating* (*takwīn* or *khalq* or *takhlīq*), *causing to exist* (*ījād*), *causing to occur* (*iḥdāth*), and *invention* (*ikhtirāʿ*) are all synonyms, all indicating one meaning—namely, to bring a nonexistent out of nonexistence and into existence. The term *act of creating*, specifically, is used out of emulation of the early Muslims (*salaf*)." ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī, *Al-Iʿtimād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 25v. [BT]

7 Yet according to the Ashʿarī school, this position does not entail the ascription of temporality to the divine entity, since they deem attributes of action to be relations (*iḍāfāt*), which have no objective existence, since they are only matters of perspective or metaphysical considerations (*umūr iʿtibāriyyah*). They are relations, given that when divine power and divine will associate with sustenance (*rizq*), a relation ensues that is called "giving sustenance" (*tarzīq*); when they associate with life (*ḥayāh*), a relation ensues that is called "giving life" (*iḥyā'*); etc. So according to the Ashʿarī school, God's act of creating is not an actual attribute, as opposed to the divine attributes of entity—namely, God's knowledge, will, power, life, hearing, sight, and speech. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 138–39.

After citing the various arguments of the Māturīdī school for the eternality of the act of creating, Imam al-Taftāzānī states, "Yet the scholars of verification (*muḥaqqiqūn*) among Sunni theologians hold the view that divine attributes of action are from the category of relations (*iḍāfāt*) or logical perspectives/metaphysical considerations (*iʿtibārāt ʿaqliyyah*), just as [for example] the Creator, sublime and exalted, existing before everything, with everything, and after everything; His being mentioned with our tongues, worshipped, giver of death, giver of life; and the like." That is, all of these perspectives convey a relation between the Creator and His creation, and the Creator is still affirmed as eternal and the creation as temporal. He continues, "[Those scholars also assert that] what is real and actual in [anterior] eternity is the source of creating, of giving sustenance, of giving life, and so on, and there is no evidence that [that source] is an attribute other than divine power and divine will." See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 174.

Regarding the Māturīdī arguments listed in the text above, the response of later scholars of verification (*muḥaqqiqūn*) is that the ascription of "creator" to God, the exalted, would be interpreted as figurative with respect to His existence in anterior eternity

(that is, figurative in terms of "actually creating," while literal in the meaning of "having the power to create"), since otherwise either the cosmos would also be anteriorly eternal or a relation between two entities (between Creator and created) would be affirmed despite the nonexistence of one of the two (that is, of the cosmos, for it was nonexistent in anterior eternity). Both options are untenable. Also, the arguments showing the absurdity of the "act of creating" being temporal do not apply, since later scholars hold it to be only a logical relation or metaphysical consideration. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 154.

58 He is Abū al-Hudhayl Muḥammad b. al-Hudhayl b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Makḥūl al-ʿAllāf al-ʿAbdī, a client (*mawlā*) of ʿAbd al-Qays, who emerged as a Muʿtazilite scholar. Noted for his exceptional intelligence, he excelled in scholastic debate and authored many works. He died in the year 235/850. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 7:131.

59 He is Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Isḥāq al-Rāwandī, or Ibn al-Rāwandī. He was a philosopher of exceptional intelligence who used to engage in much theological debate and who espoused many opinions that no one else espoused. He resided in Baghdad and was one of the earliest Muʿtazilite theologians, after which he publicly became an atheist and became notorious for his unbelief. He wrote a book on the eternality of the world and the denial of its Creator. Ibn al-Jawzī said of him, "I came across opinions of his that would not cross the mind of any sane person." He died in the year 298/910. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 1:267.

60 He is Abū Sahl Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir al-Hilālī, a Muʿtazilite theologian and jurist, who died in Baghdad. He authored many works in Muʿtazilism, engaged in much public debate, and is considered by some to be the founder of the Muʿtazilite school of Baghdad. He died in the year 210/825. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:55.

61 Imam Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī underscores this point in his well-known creed, noting, "According

to us [the Māturīdī scholars], the act of creating is *other than* the created [that is, the cosmos]," to which Imam al-Taftāzānī comments, "Because an act is necessarily different from the object of that act, like 'hitting' and 'the one hit,' or 'eating' and 'the thing eaten.'" He goes on to say that were they the same, the cosmos would be created by itself, without need for an efficient cause (or Creator). See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 178–79.

While some contemporary scientists, such as Peter Atkins, argue for a self-creating universe, in that "space-time generates its own dust in the process of its own self-assembly," logicians note the self-evident contradiction entailed in something temporal creating itself. See Peter Atkins, *Creation Revisited* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1994), 143. For a detailed discussion of this issue and the related kalam cosmological argument, see appendix A.

The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*, "'Self-manifestation' (*tajallī*) is a way of expressing appearance (*ẓuhūr*), and for this reason the shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī ﷺ said, '"Divine appearance" does not connote what is connoted by the appearance of [anything] other than Him. The reality of manifestation to the mountain is that He created in it life and sight [by which] it saw its Lord, not that He was veiled and hidden and then appeared thereafter. It is not valid to interpret the verse in other than this manner'" (30r. [BT]).

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 2:33; Usmani, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 2:204–23.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 8:606; Usmani, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 2:190–201. The mother of the believers, ʿĀ'ishah ﷺ, among others, denied that the Prophet ﷺ saw God, the exalted, on the Night of Ascension, while the Prophet's cousin Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ, among others, affirmed it. ʿĀ'ishah ﷺ adduced as evidence the Qur'anic verses "No vision apprehends

Him, but He apprehends all vision" (6:103) and "It is not fitting for a human to be spoken to by God except by revelation; or from behind a veil; or that He send a messenger who reveals, by His permission, whatever He wills" (42:51). Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ, though, simply affirmed that the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord that night, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī—who was from the immediate generation after the companions of the Prophet ﷺ—(for example) would often swear an oath that the Prophet ﷺ indeed saw his Lord. The Prophet's companion Ibn ʿUmar ﷺ (d. 73/692) once wrote to Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ for confirmation, and he responded with affirmation. Imam al-Nawawī comments that this is the stronger opinion according to the majority of scholars, who affirm the vision of that night and that it was with the two blessed eyes of the Prophet ﷺ, because it is certain that Ibn ʿAbbās could not have affirmed it unless he had heard of it directly from the Prophet ﷺ, since it is not something that one can surmise or deduce logically. It can be known only by testimony, and no one would suppose of Ibn ʿAbbās that he would merely offer his personal opinion on a matter so grave. So if the narrations of his confirmation are authentic, which they are, then the confirmation must be accepted. Moreover, the denial of ʿĀ'ishah does not take precedence over the affirmation of Ibn ʿAbbās, since affirmation is normally given more weight than denial if both parties are upright, and because the denial was based on interpretation of Qur'anic verses and not direct testimony. Had ʿĀ'ishah heard directly from the Prophet ﷺ that he did not see his Lord, she would have adduced that as evidence; instead though, she cited Qur'anic verses. And the verses she cited have other possible interpretations. The word *apprehend* (*yudrik*, from *idrāk*) in 6:103 linguistically means to "fully encompass" (*yuḥīṭ*, from *iḥāṭah*), and no one claims that the Prophet's vision of God, the exalted, fully encompassed God's being. And verse 42:51 pertains to being spoken to, not to vision; moreover, the verse could allow for exceptions (*ʿāmm makhṣūṣ*). See Muḥyī

al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 18 vols., 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 3:4–6.

65 The main contention of the Muʿtazilites was that a necessary condition for sight is temporality, such as the "thing seen" being in a locality, direction, etc. Because such accidents logically cannot pertain to the divine, the divine according to the Muʿtazilites logically cannot be seen; hence, any scriptural text that mentions the vision of God, the exalted, would have to be interpreted as metaphorical. Sunnis respond that those texts are interpreted literally because vision of God, the exalted, is not logically impossible, since vision is not *necessarily* associated with temporality, but only customarily so in this world. Vision is necessarily associated only with existence itself: if something exists, it can possibly be seen; otherwise it cannot. (This is explained in detail in the text above.) Hence the vision of God, the exalted, that He grants to believers is a real vision, despite God's transcendence above locality and temporality. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 167.

66 Imam al-Ghazālī states that the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of human vision is a type of apprehension (which God, the exalted, customarily creates in the eye) that is more perfect and more revealing than imagination (for material realities) and knowledge (for immaterial realities). For a material reality, a person can apprehend it by visualizing it in his imagination, but actual vision of that reality is of increased clarity and disclosure, and thus more perfect. Similarly, for an immaterial reality, a person apprehends it through his knowledge of it, but vision of that reality would be a clearer and more revealing "perfection" of that apprehension. Or one could say, just as seeing something material is a more perfect way of apprehending it than picturing it in the mind, so too is the seeing of something immaterial a more perfect way of apprehending it than is one's mere knowledge of it. So based on this understanding of what human vision really is, if we affirm the possibility of human knowledge of God, the exalted, we must affirm the possibility of human vision of God. See Abū Ḥāmid

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād* (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2008), 136–38.

67 It is related that the renowned mystic Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/874) said, "I saw my Lord in a dream and asked, 'How does one reach You?' He replied, 'Leave your ego, and come forth.'" It is also related that the gnostic Aḥmad b. Khaḍrawayh (d. 240/854) once saw his Lord in a dream, who said to him, "O Aḥmad, all of humanity seeks *from* Me, except Abū Yazīd, for indeed he seeks *Me*." And it is related that Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt (d. 156/773), Abū al-Fawāris Shāh b. Shujāʿ al-Kirmānī (d. ca. 300/912), [al-Ḥakīm] Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Tirmidhī (d. 320/932), and Shaykh ʿAllāmah Shams al-A'immah al-Kardarī (the student of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, author of *Al-Bidāyah*)—may God, the exalted, have mercy on them—all saw Him. Bekir Topaloğlu cites Imam Abū al-Barakāt Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī as stating, "Also, I was told by a student of knowledge who was an ascetic (*zāhid*), who used to come study with me in Bukhara, that he saw the Divine. And I used to see in Bukhara a young man who was a devotee, who did not socialize with people and would be seen at night; so I asked others about his state, and they replied, 'He saw his Lord'" (*Al-Iʿtimād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 34v).

It is also related that Abū Ḥanīfah saw the divine in his dreams one hundred times, as did Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who in the final dream asked God, the exalted, what the best form of worship is, to which He replied, "Reciting the Qur'an," and when Imam Aḥmad asked, "With understanding or without it?" God, the exalted, replied, "With understanding *or* without it." The great scholar and interpreter of dreams, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/730), said, "Whoever sees God in a dream shall enter paradise and shall live free of anxiety." And it is related that Ḥamzah al-Zayyāt (also known as Ḥamzah al-Qārī) recited the entire Qur'an to God, the exalted, in a dream.

Imam al-Taftāzānī states, "As for seeing God in dreams, it has been related from numerous early Muslims; but it is obvious that

it is a type of beholding of the heart rather than of the eye" (cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 196). See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 276; al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 169–70; Ramaḍān Effendī (d. 979/1571).

Ramaḍān Effendī states:

> The confusion of the philosophers was that if divine will were real, it would be either temporal or eternal, each of which they deemed impossible—the former because it would entail ascription of a temporal quality to the divine entity, and the latter because it would entail the cessation of something eternal, since they thought 'will' would not remain after God's granting existence [to that which was willed]. The Sunni response is that divine will is eternal, and cessation pertains only to its *relation* with the time [of that which was willed], and the relation is temporal. So cessation of the eternal is not entailed, only cessation of the temporal (cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 183).

Because of their error in reasoning, the Arab Neoplatonist philosophers rejected divine will and instead affirmed the divine as an efficient cause from whose entity the cosmos emanates involuntarily. This also led them to affirm the universe as having no beginning, while Islamic creed asserts its temporality and its having a finite past. (Both the denial of divine will and the belief in a beginningless universe are views that entail disbelief.) Imam al-Taftāzānī also adduces a teleological argument as proof of divine will, citing the order and wonders of creation as plainly indicating that each particular was willed. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 184.

Prophets, Miracles, and Early Islam

ON AFFIRMING MESSENGERS

Most of the People of Truth state that the sending of messengers by God, the exalted, is logically possible; some of them,[1] however, maintain that it is necessary, [not logically but] in light of divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*).[2] The Buddhists and Brahmins claim that it is impossible.[3]

The proof of the People of Truth is that the emanation[4] of commands and prohibitions from God, the exalted, upon His servants, and His informing them of that which entails success in their worldly lives and felicity in the hereafter—which cannot be ascertained by their intellects—is not [logically] impossible. Rather, it reflects wisdom and is correct. Thus, it is not far-fetched that He select one of His servants to have that knowledge, either by sound inspiration (*ilhām ṣaḥīḥ*) or explicit revelation (*waḥy ṣarīḥ*), whereby the chosen servant informs others of God's commands, and that He, the exalted, provide him with a sign to indicate the veracity of his message—namely, the prophetic miracle (*muʿjizah*).

To further clarify the matter, [know that] God, the exalted, created paradise and the fire, and prepared in them a reward for His friends and a punishment for His foes; the intellect, however, is unable to independently ascertain that [reality]. Likewise, He created harmful and beneficial things in this life, and did not endow the senses or the intellect with the ability to differentiate between the harmful and beneficial, nor between nutrition, poison, and medicine. And the intellect cannot merely experiment, due to the chance therein of perishing. Thus, *divine wisdom entails that* He send a messenger to convey to His servants that which He has prepared for them in the afterlife and that which He has laid down in this life, as well as to command them to [do] what entails their

القَوْلُ فِي إِثْبَاتِ الرُّسُلِ

قَالَ عَامَّةُ أَهْلِ الْحَقِّ إِرْسَالُ الرُّسُلِ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى مُمْكِنٌ يَقْتَضِيهِ الْعَقْلُ ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِنَّهُ وَاجِبٌ بِقَضِيَّةِ الْحِكْمَةِ . وَزَعَمَتِ السُّمَنِيَّةُ وَالْبَرَاهِمَةُ أَنَّهُ مُحَالٌ .

وَحُجَّةُ أَهْلِ الْحَقِّ أَنَّ صُدُورَ الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى عِبَادِهِ وَإِخْبَارَهُمْ عَمَّا فِيهِ صَلَاحُ دَارَيْهِمْ مِمَّا قَصُرَتْ عُقُولُهُمْ عَن مَعْرِفَتِهِ غَيْرُ مُسْتَحِيلٍ ، وَأَنَّهُ حِكْمَةٌ وَصَوَابٌ ، فَلَا يَبْعُدُ أَن يَخُصَّ بَعْضَ عِبَادِهِ بِعِلْمِ ذَلِكَ إِمَّا بِإِلْهَامٍ صَحِيحٍ أَوْ وَحْيٍ صَرِيحٍ فَيُخْبِرُ غَيْرَهُ بِأَمْرِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَيَجْعَلَ لَهُ أَمَارَةً تَدُلُّ عَلَى صِدْقِ إِخْبَارِهِ ، وَهِيَ الْمُعْجِزَةُ .

وَبَيَانُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ الْجَنَّةَ وَالنَّارَ وَأَعَدَّ فِيهِمَا الثَّوَابَ لِأَوْلِيَائِهِ وَالْعِقَابَ لِأَعْدَائِهِ ، وَلَيْسَ فِي الْعَقْلِ إِمْكَانُ الْوُقُوفِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ ، وَكَذَا خَلَقَ الْأَشْيَاءَ الضَّارَّةَ وَالنَّافِعَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَمْ يُودِعْ فِي الْحِسِّ وَالْعَقْلِ الْوُقُوفَ عَلَى التَّفْرِقَةِ بَيْنَ الضَّارِّ وَالنَّافِعِ وَالْغِذَاءِ وَالسَّمِّ وَالدَّوَاءِ ، وَالْعَقْلُ لَا يُطِيقُ التَّجْرِبَةَ لِمَا فِيهَا مِنِ احْتِمَالِ الْهَلَاكِ ، فَاقْتَضَتِ الْحِكْمَةُ أَن يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا يُخْبِرُ عِبَادَهُ بِمَا أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْعُقْبَى وَبِمَا أَوْدَعَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَيَأْمُرُهُم بِمَا فِيهِ

well-being and deter them from [doing] what entails their destruction, "so that he who perishes does so on a clear proof, and he who lives does so on a clear proof" (8:42).

If it is said: If the messenger brings forth that which corresponds to logic, then the intellect is sufficient and has no need of it; if he brings that which contradicts logic, the intellect would reject it anyways. So there is no point in sending messengers. We respond: The messenger comes with that which the intellect alone is unable to ascertain and perceive, for logical premises are of three categories: necessary, impossible, and possible. The unaided intellect judges something as necessary or impossible, yet pauses at the possible and does not pass judgment, neither negating it nor affirming it. It does not deem any possible thing as obligatory or as forbidden, except that if the act is conjoined to a praiseworthy consequence it proceeds, and if to a blameworthy end it refrains. So if the messenger from God, the exalted, clarifies the end results of matters and of actions, the intellect comes to know that wherein lies its well-being, and accepts it, and that wherein lies its ruin, and rejects it. Of course, it is possible that the sacred law (*sharʿ*) brings forth an explication of that which the intellect can ascertain, so as to facilitate the matter for its possessor, as it would otherwise need to engage in constant reflection, perpetual thought, and exhaustive inquisition, such that were it to be preoccupied therewith, most of its beneficial affairs would be neglected.[5] Therefore, God's informing [the servant] of that [knowledge], by means of the messenger, is of His sheer largesse and mercy, as He, the exalted, states, "And We have not sent you save as a mercy to all realms of being" (21:107).

صَلَاحُهُمْ وَيَزْجُرُهُمْ عَمَّا فِيهِ هَلَاكُهُمْ ، ﴿ لِّيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنۢ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنۢ بَيِّنَةٍ ﴾ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ أَتَى الرَّسُولُ بِمَا يَقْتَضِيهِ الْعَقْلُ فَفِي الْعَقْلِ غُنْيَةٌ وَكِفَايَةٌ عَنْ ذَلِكَ ، وَلَوْ أَتَى بِمَا يَنْفِيهِ الْعَقْلُ فَالْعَقْلُ يَرُدُّهُ وَيُحِيلُهُ ، فَلَا فَائِدَةَ فِيهِ . قُلْنَا يَأْتِي الرَّسُولُ بِمَا يَقْصُرُ الْعَقْلُ عَن مَعْرِفَتِهِ وَإِدْرَاكِهِ ، فَإِنَّ قَضِيَّاتِ الْعُقُولِ مُنْقَسِمَةٌ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَقْسَامٍ : وَاجِبٌ وَمُمْتَنِعٌ وَجَائِزٌ ، وَالْعَقْلُ يَحْكُمُ فِي الْوَاجِبِ وَالْمُمْتَنِعِ وَلَكِن يَتَوَقَّفُ فِي الْجَائِزِ ، فَلَا يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ لَا بِالنَّفْيِ وَلَا بِالْإِثْبَاتِ ، وَلَا يُوجِبُ شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُ ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ إِذَا تَعَلَّقَتْ بِهِ عَاقِبَةٌ حَمِيدَةٌ يُقْبِلُ عَلَيْهِ ، وَإِذَا تَعَلَّقَتْ بِهِ عَاقِبَةٌ ذَمِيمَةٌ يُعْرِضُ عَنْهُ . فَإِذَا بَيَّنَ الرَّسُولُ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى عَوَاقِبَ الْأُمُورِ وَالْأَفْعَالِ وَقَفَ الْعَقْلُ عَلَى مَا فِيهِ صَلَاحُهُ فَيَقْبَلُهُ وَعَلَى مَا فِيهِ فَسَادُهُ فَيَرُدُّهُ . عَلَى أَنَّهُ يَجُوزُ أَن يَرِدَ الشَّرْعُ بِبَيَانِ مَا فِي الْعَقْلِ إِمْكَانُ الْوُقُوفِ عَلَيْهِ ، تَيْسِيرًا لِلْأَمْرِ عَلَى الْعَاقِلِ ، إِذْ لَا بُدَّ لَهُ فِي مَعْرِفَةِ ذَلِكَ مِن مُلَازَمَةِ التَّفَكُّرِ وَالنَّظَرِ الدَّائِمِ وَالْبَحْثِ الْكَامِلِ ، بِحَيْثُ لَوِ اشْتَغَلَ بِذَلِكَ لَتَعَطَّلَ أَكْثَرُ مَصَالِحِهِ ، فَيَكُونُ التَّنْبِيهُ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى ذَلِكَ بِوَاسِطَةِ الرَّسُولِ فَضْلًا وَرَحْمَةً ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴾ .

To proceed, it is a condition that the messenger be a male, since according to us but not the Ashʿarī scholars, femininity contradicts "being sent." This is because the latter entails being well-known so as to proclaim the message, while the former entails concealment [that is, out of modesty and social etiquette]; the two are therefore contradictory. Another condition is that he make claim to that which the intellect does not deem impossible [that is, metaphysical impossibilities, such as contradictions], and that he establish proof of the veracity of his claim, since according to us, it is not obligatory to accept his assertion before he brings forth a prophetic miracle (*muʿjizah*). The Ibadites among the Khawarij disagree, for they state that his assertion must be accepted before manifestation of the miracle. This view is absurd, since there is no way to distinguish a true prophet from a false prophet except by a miracle; therefore, in its absence, acceptance [of his assertion] is not mandatory.

The prophetic miracle is that which manifests the incapacity (*ʿajz*) of creation to bring forth its like; the letter *hā'* [at the end of the Arabic word *muʿjizah*] is to denote emphasis, not the feminine. Its formal definition according to theologians is "the appearance of a matter that breaks the customary norm, at the hand of one claiming prophecy, upon being challenged by those in denial, in a manner that renders them incapable of producing its like."[6] The way a miracle indicates the truthfulness of a prophet is that we realize[7] it is purely an act of God, the exalted, the servant having no share in it at all, such as turning a staff into a snake or bringing the dead to life. When God, the exalted, produces it immediately after a prophet's statement "If I am truthful in my claim to being Your messenger, then do such and such," it serves as a confirmation for him *by action*; it is akin to His saying, "You are truthful." [This is] like one who, in front of the sultan, claims to be his messenger and then says to his servants, "The sign of my honesty is that I say to him, 'If I am truthful, then rise from

ثُمَّ الشَّرْطُ فِيهِ أَن يَكُونَ ذَكَرًا لِأَنَّ الْأُنُوثَةَ تُنَافِي الْإِرْسَالَ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لِلْأَشْعَرِيَّةِ ، وَذَلِكَ لِأَنَّ الرِّسَالَةَ تَقْتَضِي الْاِشْتِهَارَ بِالدَّعْوَةِ وَالْأُنُوثَةَ تُوجِبُ السَّتْرَ ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا تَنَافٍ ؛ وَيَدَّعِي مَا لَا يُحِيلُهُ الْعَقْلُ ، وَيُقِيمَ الدَّلَالَةَ عَلَى صِدْقِ دَعْوَاهُ ، إِذْ لَا يَجِبُ قَبُولُ قَوْلِهِ بِدُونِ الْمُعْجِزَةِ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لِلْإِبَاضِيَّةِ مِنَ الْخَوَارِجِ ، حَيْثُ قَالُوا يَجِبُ قَبُولُ قَوْلِهِ قَبْلَ إِظْهَارِ الْمُعْجِزَةِ . وَذَلِكَ قَوْلٌ بَاطِلٌ لِأَنَّهُ لَا تَقَعُ التَّفْرِقَةُ بَيْنَ النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُتَنَبِّي إِلَّا بِالْمُعْجِزَةِ ، فَلَا يَلْزَمُ الْقَبُولُ بِدُونِهَا .

وَالْمُعْجِزَةُ مَا يُظْهِرُ عَجْزَ الْخَلْقِ عَنِ الْإِتْيَانِ بِمِثْلِهِ ، وَالْهَاءُ لِلْمُبَالَغَةِ لَا لِلتَّأْنِيثِ . وَحَدُّهُ عِنْدَ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ ظُهُورُ أَمْرٍ بِخِلَافِ الْعَادَةِ عَلَى يَدِ مُدَّعِي النُّبُوَّةِ عِنْدَ تَحَدِّي الْمُنْكِرِينَ عَلَى وَجْهٍ يُعْجِزُ الْمُنْكِرِينَ عَنِ الْإِتْيَانِ بِمِثْلِهِ . وَوَجْهُ دَلَالَةِ الْمُعْجِزَةِ عَلَى صِدْقِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنَّا لَمَّا عَرَفْنَا أَنَّ الْمُعْجِزَةَ فِعْلُ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَا صُنْعَ لِلْعِبَادِ فِي ذَلِكَ ، كَقَلْبِ الْعَصَا حَيَّةً وَإِحْيَاءِ الْمَيِّتِ ، فَإِذَا أَظْهَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَقِيبَ قَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « إِنْ كُنْتُ صَادِقًا أَنِّي رَسُولُكَ فَافْعَلْ كَذَا » ، فَفَعَلَ ، كَانَ ذَلِكَ تَصْدِيقًا لَهُ بِالْفِعْلِ ، فَيَكُونُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ قَوْلِهِ صَدَقْتَ . كَمَنِ ادَّعَى بِحَضْرَةِ السُّلْطَانِ أَنَّهُ رَسُولُهُ ، ثُمَّ قَالَ لِغِلْمَانِهِ « آيَةُ صِدْقِي أَنْ أَقُولَ لَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُ صَادِقًا فَقُمْ مِنْ

your seat three times and sit back down,'" which [the sultan] does, while the servants know that such behavior is not customary on the sultan's part; that act serves as a confirmation for him in his claim, akin to his saying, "You are truthful." The same applies here. And enablement is by God alone.

ON EVIDENCE OF THE PROPHETHOOD OF MUḤAMMAD ﷺ

Having understood the above, we will now establish proofs of the truthfulness of our Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, as that is the basis of this whole discussion. And then, according to us, the prophethood of all other prophets عليهم السلام is affirmed by his informing us thereof. This evidence has two main components.

The first is the Qur'an, by which he challenged all the eloquent speakers of the Arabs and the non-Arabs to bring its like. They proved incapable of doing so, as in the Exalted's statements "And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then bring forth the like of one of its chapters" (2:23) and "Say: Verily if all humans and jinn gathered to bring the like of this Qur'an, they would not bring the like of it, even if some of them assisted others" (17:88), in addition to other Qur'anic verses. So all proved incapable of bringing the like of it, since if they were able to do so, they certainly would have, due to their zeal for disproving his claim and overcoming his proof. And, had they done so, it would surely have been well-known and transmitted to us, just as the false claims and senseless jabber of Musaylimah the Liar[8] [d. 12/633] were transmitted.

مَجْلِسِكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ ثُمَّ اقْعُدْ » ، فَفَعَلَ وَعَرَفَ الْغِلْمَانُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُن مِنْ عَادَةِ السُّلْطَانِ ذَلِكَ ، كَانَ ذَلِكَ الْفِعْلُ تَصْدِيقًا لَهُ فِي دَعْوَاهُ ، بِمَنْزِلَةِ قَوْلِهِ صَدَقْتَ ، فَكَذَا هَذَا . وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

فَصْلٌ

فَإِذَا عَرَفْنَا هَذَا نُقِيمُ الدَّلَالَةَ عَلَى صِدْقِ نُبُوَّةِ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ، إِذْ هُوَ الْأَصْلُ فِي الْبَابِ ، ثُمَّ نُبُوَّةُ سَائِرِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ تَثْبُتُ بِإِخْبَارِهِ عِنْدَنَا . وَالدَّلَالَةُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ مِن وَجْهَيْنِ :

أَحَدُهُمَا الْقُرْآنُ الَّذِي تَحَدَّى بِهِ جَمِيعَ فُصَحَاءِ الْعَرَبِ وَالْعَجَمِ بِإِتْيَانِ مِثْلِهِ فَعَجَزُوا عَنْ ذَلِكَ ، كَمَا فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِى رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُواْ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِۦ ﴾ ، وَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ قُل لَّئِنِ ٱجْتَمَعَتِ ٱلْإِنسُ وَٱلْجِنُّ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يَأْتُواْ بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِۦ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾ إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ الَّتِي نَطَقَ بِهَا الْقُرْآنُ . فَعَجَزَ الْكُلُّ عَنِ الْإِتْيَانِ بِمِثْلِهِ ، وَدَلَالَةُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّهُمْ لَوْ قَدَرُوا عَلَى إِتْيَانِهِ لَأَتَوا بِذَلِكَ ، لِحِرْصِهِمْ عَلَى إِبْطَالِ دَعْوَاهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَإِدْحَاضِ حُجَّتِهِ . وَلَوْ فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ لَظَهَرَ وَنُقِلَ إِلَيْنَا ، كَمَا نُقِلَ تُرَّهَاتُ مُسَيْلِمَةَ الْكَذَّابِ وَهَذَيَانَاتُهُ .

If it is said: Perhaps being preoccupied with combat and careers prevented them from that. We respond: The Qur'anic challenge was before any warfare, and supporting the religion and defending its sanctuary was more important to them than careers. The suggested reasoning, therefore, is clearly incorrect.

If it is said: Perhaps they did oppose it [and brought the like of it], yet the believers ignored it and promulgated only the Qur'an. We respond: The rejectors in that time were greater in number than the believers, so had they found any successful opposition to the Qur'an, then their obstinacy, denial, and animosity toward the Prophet ﷺ would have incited them to recount and propagate it, just as the believers' conviction and love of the Prophet ﷺ inspired them to relate the Qur'an and promulgate it. Despite that, however, no such opposition has been transmitted to us, so it is certain that they proved incapable of doing so. And, if the most eloquent Arabs and their rhetoricians proved incapable of opposing the Qur'an, then those who came after them, who were non-Arab, would perforce be even more incapable.

The second component of this evidence is what has been related about him with regard to prophetic miracles: some [of his miracles] involving material things and some involving [his giving information] of the unseen world; some [miracles] pertaining to himself and others pertaining to the world around him. As for what pertains to himself, they include: the light that appeared upon the forehead of his forefathers and foremothers, whose loins and wombs he was in;[9] that which is mentioned in ancient books of his characteristics and traits, the time of his coming, and the description of his followers and supporters;[10] and what has been narrated [after him] describing his person, the beauty of his form, the nobility of his virtues,

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَعَلَّ الْاِشْتِغَالَ بِالْحُرُوبِ وَالْمَكَاسِبِ مَنَعَهُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ ، قُلْنَا التَّحَدِّي بِالْقُرْآنِ كَانَ قَبْلَ الْمُحَارَبَةِ ، وَنُصْرَةُ الدِّينِ وَالذَّبُّ عَنِ الْحَرِيمِ أَهَمُّ عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْمَكَاسِبِ ، فَبَانَ أَنَّ التَّعْلِيلَ فَاسِدٌ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ عَارَضُوهُ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ هَجَرُوا ذَلِكَ وَأَشْهَرُوا الْقُرْآنَ ، قُلْنَا الْجَاحِدُونَ فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ، فَلَوْ وَجَدُوا مَا يُعَارِضُ الْقُرْآنَ لَحَمَلَهُمْ جُحُودُهُمْ وَتَكْذِيبُهُمْ وَعَدَاوَاتُهُمْ لِلنَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى نَقْلِهِ وَإِشْهَارِهِ ، كَمَا حَمَلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تَصْدِيقُهُمْ وَمَحَبَّتُهُمْ لِلنَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى نَقْلِ الْقُرْآنِ وَإِشْهَارِهِ ، وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ لَمْ يُنْقَلْ إِلَيْنَا ، فَعُلِمَ أَنَّهُمْ عَجَزُوا عَنْ ذَلِكَ . فَإِذَا عَجَزَتْ فُصَحَاءُ الْعَرَبِ وَبُلَغَاؤُهُمْ عَن مُعَارَضَتِهِ كَانَ مَنْ بَعْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعَجَمِ أَعْجَزَ .

وَالثَّانِي مِنَ الدَّلَالَةِ مَا نُقِلَ عَنْهُ مِنَ الْمُعْجِزَاتِ الْحِسِّيَّةِ وَالْخَبَرِيَّةِ ، بَعْضُهَا فِي ذَاتِهِ وَبَعْضُهَا خَارِجٌ عَنْ ذَاتِهِ . أَمَّا مَا تَعَلَّقَ بِذَاتِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ، ظُهُورُ النُّورِ فِي جَبِينِ مَنْ كَانَ هُوَ فِي صُلْبِهِ وَرَحِمِهَا مِنْ آبَائِهِ وَأُمَّهَاتِهِ ، وَمَا ذُكِرَ فِي الْكُتُبِ السَّالِفَةِ مِن نُعُوتِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ وَبَيَانِ وَقْتِ خُرُوجِهِ وَصِفَةِ أَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَشْيَاعِهِ ، وَكَذَا مَا نُقِلَ مِنْ أَوْصَافِ حِلْيَتِهِ وَلُطْفِ صُورَتِهِ وَكَرَمِ أَخْلَاقِهِ

and his kind acts, in [for example] the reports of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib[11]—may God ennoble his face—Hind b. Abī Hālah[12] رضي الله عنه [d. 36/656], and Umm Maʿbad[13] رضي الله عنها [see appendix B]. All of this serves as evidence, for those who possess keen discernment (*firāsah*), that the likes of such qualities have never been gathered in any one person before him or after him, thereby indicating the nobility of his entity and the loftiness of his person, such that no one matches him therein. As it is related that every time Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq[14] رضي الله عنه [d. 13/634] looked at him in his youth and reflected on his traits, [Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه] would say, "This one has been created for a great affair indeed." So when [the Prophet ﷺ] called him to Islam, [Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه] said, "This is what I used to hope for regarding you."[15] And when ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām[16] رضي الله عنه [d. 43/663] met him for the first time, he said, "This is not the face of a liar."[17] And ʿAbd Allāh b. Rawāḥah[18] رضي الله عنه [d. 8/629] said of him:

Had he not brought forth manifest signs and scripture,
The mere sight of him would convince you of his message.[19]

He continued to exhibit these traits for his entire life, not changing whatsoever in private or public, neither when angry nor when pleased, to the extent that his enemies, despite their extreme animosity and zeal to slander his character, found no fault in him at all. This, then, is the strongest proof of the truthfulness of his message, for it is impossible that the all-wise—may His majesty be exalted—gather all of these virtues for one whom He knows will invent lies against Him, and then give him respite for twenty-three years, give victory to his religion over all other faiths and grant him victory against his enemies, and finally give life to the traces [of his person, deeds, and teachings] after his death until the Day of Resurrection.

وَجَمِيلِ أَفْعَالِهِ ، كَمَا رُوِيَ فِي حَدِيثِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ كَرَّمَ اللهُ وَجْهَهُ وَهِنْدِ بْنِ أَبِي هَالَةَ وَأُمِّ مَعْبَدٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ ، كُلُّ ذَلِكَ دَلِيلٌ مِنْ جِهَةِ أَصْحَابِ الْفِرَاسَةِ أَنَّ مِثْلَ هَذِهِ الصِّفَاتِ لَمْ تَجْتَمِعْ فِي أَحَدٍ قَبْلَهُ وَلَا بَعْدَهُ فَيَدُلُّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى شَرَفِ ذَاتِهِ وَعُلُوِّ شَأْنِهِ بِحَيْثُ لَا يُوَازِيهِ أَحَدٌ فِي ذَلِكَ ، كَمَا رُوِيَ أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ كُلَّمَا نَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي صِغَرِهِ وَتَأَمَّلَ فِي أَوْصَافِهِ يَقُولُ « خُلِقَ هَذَا لِأَمْرٍ عَظِيمٍ » ، فَلَمَّا دَعَاهُ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ قَالَ « هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُ أَرْجُو مِنْكَ » . وَلَمَّا لَقِيَهُ عَبْدُ اللهِ بْنُ سَلَامٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ قَالَ « مَا هَذَا بِوَجْهِ كَذَّابٍ » . وَقَالَ فِيهِ عَبْدُ اللهِ بْنُ رَوَاحَةَ :

لَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ مُبَيِّنَةٌ ... كَانَتْ بَدِيهَتُهُ تُنْبِئُكَ بِالْخَبَرِ

ثُمَّ اسْتَمَرَّ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْأَخْلَاقِ طُولَ عُمْرِهِ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهَا سِرًّا أَوْ جَهْرًا ، لَا فِي حَالِ غَضَبٍ وَلَا رِضًا ، حَتَّى لَمْ يَجِدْ أَعْدَاؤُهُ مَعَ شِدَّةِ عَدَاوَتِهِ وَحِرْصِهِمْ عَلَى الطَّعْنِ فِيهِ مَطْعَنًا . فَيَكُونُ ذَلِكَ أَقْوَى دَلِيلٍ عَلَى صِدْقِ دَعْوَاهُ ، إِذْ يَسْتَحِيلُ مِنَ الْحَكِيمِ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ أَن يَجْمَعَ هَذِهِ الْفَضَائِلَ فِي حَقِّ مَن يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ يَفْتَرِي عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُمْهِلَهُ ثَلَاثًا وَعِشْرِينَ سَنَةً ثُمَّ يُظْهِرَ دِينَهُ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْأَدْيَانِ وَيَنْصُرَهُ عَلَى أَعْدَائِهِ وَيُحْيِي آثَارَهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ .

As for miracles in the world around him, they include splitting the moon,[20] drawing a tree nigh,[21] the speaking of stones,[22] the yearning of the palm trunk,[23] the complaining of the she camel,[2 the testimony of the roasted sheep of its being poisoned,[25] and the shading of clouds over him.[26]

They also include his informing [us] of past and future events Past events include the stories of prophets عليهم السلام and the conditions of bygone nations in various lands, in different statements [o both the Qur'an and well-known hadith], related in the presence of scholars of the People of the Book, such that none of them proved capable of denying his truthfulness or slandering him. This occurred despite his having never read ancient books or interacted with People of the Book, indicating that he related news by revelation from God, the exalted, as a messenger. Future events include his foretelling on the Day of Badr what person would be killed, and in what place, which occurred as he said.[27] He also told of fighting Banū Ḥanīfah and Persia; the downfall of Chosroes' kingdom; the victory of his religion over all other faiths and its reaching the farthest limits of the East and West; and other events as mentioned in narrations, which occurred as he foretold.[28] Moreover, his demeanor did not resemble that of fortune-tellers, magicians, o astrologists—all of whom, according to what is related, engaged in poetry and rhyming, in concealing vile traits, in seeking the aid of devils, in looking into astrolabes, or in numerology. Rather his personality was one of uprightness, tranquility, honor, shunning worldly aims, and constant immersion in the remembrance of God, the exalted.

وَأَمَّا مَا كَانَ خَارِجَ ذَاتِهِ ، نَحْوَ انْشِقَاقِ الْقَمَرِ وَانْجِذَابِ الشَّجَرِ وَاسْتِنْطَاقِ الْحَجَرِ وَحَنِينِ الْجِذْعِ وَشِكَايَةِ النَّاقَةِ وَشَهَادَةِ الشَّاةِ الْمَصْلِيَّةِ بِأَنَّهَا مَسْمُومَةٌ وَإِظْلَالِ السَّحَابِ إِيَّاهُ .

وَكَذَا إِخْبَارَاتُهُ عَنِ الْكَوَائِنِ فِي الْمَاضِي وَالْمُسْتَقْبَلِ . أَمَّا الْمَاضِي فَنَحْوَ قَصَصِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ وَأَحْوَالِ الْأُمَمِ السَّالِفَةِ فِي مَوَاضِعَ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ بِأَلْفَاظٍ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ بِمَحْضَرٍ مِنْ عُلَمَاءِ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ، بِحَيْثُ لَمْ يَقْدِرْ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ عَلَى تَكْذِيبِهِ وَالطَّعْنِ فِيهِ ، مَعَ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ كُتُبَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَلَا خَالَطَ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ ؛ يَدُلُّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَنَّهُ يُخْبِرُ بِوَحْيِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَإِرْسَالِهِ . وَأَمَّا الْمُسْتَقْبَلُ فَكَمَا أَخْبَرَ يَوْمَ بَدْرٍ أَنَّهُ يُقْتَلُ فُلَانٌ فِي مَوْضِعِ كَذَا وَفُلَانٌ فِي مَوْضِعِ كَذَا ، وَكَانَ كَمَا أَخْبَرَ . وَكَذَا أَخْبَرَ عَنْ قِتَالِ بَنِي حَنِيفَةَ وَفَارِسٍ وَانْقِرَاضِ مُلْكِ كِسْرَى وَظُهُورِ دِينِهِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْأَدْيَانِ وَبُلُوغِهِ إِلَى أَقْصَى الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ كَمَا جَاءَتْ بِهِ الْأَخْبَارُ ، وَقَدْ ظَهَرَ كَمَا أَخْبَرَ بِهِ . وَلَمْ تَشْتَبِهْ حَالَتُهُ فِي تِلْكَ الْإِخْبَارَاتِ بِحَالِ الْكَهَنَةِ وَالسَّحَرَةِ وَالْمُنَجِّمَةِ ، كَمَا نُقِلَ عَنْهُمْ مِنَ السَّجْعِ وَالرَّجْزِ وَمُلَابَسَةِ الْأَقْذَارِ وَالْاِسْتِعَانَةِ بِالشَّيَاطِينِ وَالنَّظَرِ فِي الْأُصْطُرْلَابِ وَالتَّفَكُّرِ فِي الْحِسَابِ ، بَلْ كَانَتْ أَحْوَالُهُ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى الْاِسْتِقَامَةِ وَالسُّكُونِ وَالْوَقَارِ وَتَرْكِ الْحُظُوظِ الدُّنْيَوِيَّةِ وَدَوَامِ الْاِشْتِغَالِ بِذِكْرِ اللهِ تَعَالَى .

These miracles, even if most of them are individually related through single-chain reports (*āḥād*, or transmission that falls short of *tawātur*), nonetheless when considered altogether indicate one common phenomenon [present in each instance], —namely, the occurrence of the "preternatural and miraculous" related to him. This phenomenon, then, is effectively related through incontestable multiple-chain transmission, resulting in definitive and undeniable knowledge (*ʿilm qaṭʿī*). This is similar to narrations that individually are related through single-chain reports regarding [for example] the generosity of Ḥātim[29] [d. 46 BH/578], the justice of Anūshirwān [the Sasanid ruler Chosroes I, d. 579 CE], the courage of ʿAlī ﷺ, or the knowledge of Abū Ḥanīfah[30] ﷺ. Since each category in its totality indicates one particular theme—namely, generosity, justice, courage, and knowledge—then the result is definitive and undeniable knowledge of these themes; the same applies here.

If it is said: Some Christians claim that he was a messenger to the Arabs alone, so what is the proof of the universality of his message? We respond: Once we have proven that he is a messenger, then [it is necessarily known that he speaks the truth, because] a messenger does not lie. And he informed us that he was sent to all of humanity, as God, the exalted, states, "And We have not sent you except to humanity at large" (34:28), and God—may His majesty be exalted—states, "Say: O humanity, verily I am God's messenger to you all, without exception" (7:158). Also, he sent his messenger to Chosroes (Kisrā), Caesar (Qayṣar), and the remaining kings of the world, calling them to Islam;[31] and the Negus (Najāshī)[32] ﷺ [d. 9/630] and others believed in him. So clearly he is a messenger to all. And God alone is the One who enables.

وَهَذِهِ الْمُعْجِزَاتُ وَإِنْ ثَبَتَ أَكْثَرُهَا بِطَرِيقِ الْآحَادِ وَلَكِنْ دَلَّتْ بِمَجْمُوعِهَا عَلَى مَعْنًى وَاحِدٍ ، وَهُوَ ظُهُورُ النَّاقِضِ لِلْعَادَةِ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ ، فَيَصِيرُ كَالْمُتَوَاتِرِ فِي هَذِهِ الدَّلَالَةِ فَيُفِيدُ الْعِلْمَ قَطْعًا ، كَالْحِكَايَاتِ الَّتِي نُقِلَتْ بِطَرِيقِ الْآحَادِ عَنْ جُودِ حَاتِمٍ وَعَدْلِ أَنُوشِرْوَانَ وَشَجَاعَةِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَعِلْمِ أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ، وَلَكِن لَمَّا دَلَّ كُلُّ جِنْسٍ مِنْهَا بِمَجْمُوعِهَا عَلَى مَعْنًى وَاحِدٍ ، وَهُوَ الْجُودُ وَالْعَدْلُ وَالشَّجَاعَةُ وَالْعِلْمُ ، وَقَعَ الْعِلْمُ بِهَذِهِ الْمَعَانِي قَطْعًا ، فَكَذَا هَذَا .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ زَعَمَ بَعْضُ النَّصَارَى أَنَّهُ رَسُولٌ إِلَى الْعَرَبِ خَاصَّةً فَمَا الدَّلِيلُ عَلَى تَعْمِيمِ الرِّسَالَةِ ؟ قُلْنَا مَهْمَا دَلَلْنَا عَلَى كَوْنِهِ رَسُولًا فَالرَّسُولُ لَا يَكْذِبُ ، وَقَدْ أَخْبَرَ أَنَّهُ بُعِثَ إِلَى النَّاسِ كَافَّةً ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَٰكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ ﴾ وَقَالَ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ ﴿ قُلۡ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ إِلَيۡكُمۡ جَمِيعًا ﴾ ، وَقَدْ بَعَثَ رُسُلَهُ إِلَى كِسْرَى وَقَيْصَرَ وَسَائِرِ مُلُوكِ الْأَطْرَافِ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ ، فَآمَنَ بِهِ النَّجَّاشِيُّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَغَيْرُهُ ، فَدَلَّ أَنَّهُ رَسُولٌ إِلَى الْكُلِّ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

ON TRAITS SPECIFIC TO PROPHETS

A messenger must have certain qualities by which he is distinguished from others, and by virtue of which he is worthy of conveying [the message] between God, the exalted, and His creation. God, the exalted, says, "God knows better as to where He places His message" (6:124). Among these [qualities] is that he be the most intelligent of the people of his age and the best of them in character. Moreover, he may not possess any attributes that encumber the relaying of the message; if any do exist before [the] revelation [of the message], then God, the exalted, removes them at the time of sending, as He did with the speech difficulty of Moses ﷺ upon the latter's request [see 20:25–28, 36]. He must also be divinely protected [infallible (*maʿṣūm*)] in speech and in action, from anything disgraceful or that would lower his estimation [in the eyes of people]. If anything [apparently suboptimal or imperfect] is done by him involuntarily and unintentionally, then God, the exalted, informs him of it and admonishes him, without ignoring it or even delaying the admonition.

The shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī—may God illuminate his traces of purification—said that infallibility does not preclude tribulation, meaning it does not force him into obedience nor render him incapable of disobedience. Rather, it is a subtle grace (*luṭf*) from God, the exalted, that incites him to do good and dissuades him from evil, yet with his [full] volition intact, such that the trial and test [of faith] are genuine. Infallibility with regard to disbelief, both prior to revelation and after it, is affirmed according to all Muslims, except the Fuḍayliyyah[33] of the Khawarij. Infallibility with regard to sins after revelation is affirmed according to Sunni orthodoxy,[34] but not [according to] the Ḥashwiyyah, for they transmit in the stories of David, Solomon, Joseph, and other prophets ﷺ what would appear to be the committing of sins.

القَوْلُ فِي خَوَاصِّ النُّبُوَّةِ

لَا بُدَّ لِلرَّسُولِ مِن مَعَانٍ يَخْتَصُّ بِهَا عَنْ غَيْرِهِ، فَيَصِيرُ بِهَا أَهْلًا لِلسِّفَارَةِ بَيْنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ، قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ ٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُۥ ﴾. فَمِنْ ذَلِكَ أَن يَكُونَ أَعْقَلَ مِنْ أَهْلِ عَصْرِهِ وَأَحْسَنَهُمْ خُلُقًا؛ وَلَا يَكُونَ مَوْصُوفًا بِصِفَاتٍ تُخِلُّ بِأَدَاءِ الرِّسَالَةِ، وَلَوْ كَانَ قَبْلَ الْإِرْسَالِ يُزِيلُ اللهُ تَعَالَى وَقْتَ إِرْسَالِهِ كَمَا أَزَالَ عُقْدَةَ لِسَانِ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِسُؤَالِهِ؛ وَيَكُونَ مَعْصُومًا فِي أَقْوَالِهِ وَأَفْعَالِهِ عَمَّا يَشِينُهُ وَيُسْقِطُ قَدْرَهُ. وَإِنْ جَرَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ مِنْ غَيْرِ قَصْدِهِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ يُنَبِّهْهُ وَيُعَاتِبْهُ وَلَا يُهْمِلُهُ بَلْ لَا يُمْهِلُهُ.

قَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ الْمَاتُرِيدِيُّ، بَيَّضَ اللهُ غُرَّتَهُ، الْعِصْمَةُ لَا تُزِيلُ الْمِحْنَةَ، وَمَعْنَاهُ أَنَّهَا لَا تُجْبِرُهُ عَلَى الطَّاعَةِ وَلَا تُعْجِزُهُ عَنِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ، بَلْ هِيَ لُطْفٌ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى يَحْمِلُهُ عَلَى فِعْلِ الْخَيْرِ وَيَزْجُرُهُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ مَعَ بَقَاءِ الِاخْتِيَارِ تَحْقِيقًا لِلْابْتِلَاءِ وَالْامْتِحَانِ. وَالْعِصْمَةُ عَنِ الْكُفْرِ ثَابِتَةٌ قَبْلَ الْوَحْيِ وَبَعْدَهُ عِنْدَ عَامَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ إِلَّا عِنْدَ الْفُضَيْلِيَّةِ مِنَ الْخَوَارِجِ. وَالْعِصْمَةُ عَنِ الْمَعَاصِي ثَابِتَةٌ بَعْدَ الْوَحْيِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ إِلَّا عِنْدَ الْحَشْوِيَّةِ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَنْقُلُونَ فِي قِصَّةِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَيُوسُفَ وَغَيْرِهِمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ مَا يُوهِمُ ارْتِكَابَ الذَّنْبِ مِنْهُمْ،

Some of that is outright rejected [as lies], and some is interpreted in a sound manner befitting their [purified] state. The evidence of our position is that [the prophets] are God's evidence against His servants [humanity], as God, the exalted, states, "Messengers, who give glad tidings and who warn, so that humanity has no proof whatsoever against God" (4:165). Rather it is God alone who has proof against humanity. So if committing sins were possible for them, their word could not be trusted, whereby the proof is rendered null. As for [their committing sins] prior to [receiving] revelation, it is no different according to all of the Mu'tazilites and Khawarij; according to us, though, it is possible yet rare,[35] after which, at the time of revelation, their state returns to [complete] righteousness and uprightness. And God alone is the guide to what is right.

ON SAINTLY MIRACLES

According to us and contrary to the Mu'tazilites, saintly miracles are possible. Likewise, according to us but not them, sorcery (*siḥr*) and the evil eye (*ʿayn*) are realities. Our evidence in this matter is based on both revelation (*naql*) and reason (*ʿaql*).

As for revelation, God, the exalted, informs us regarding the companion of Solomon ﷺ that he brought forth the throne of Bilqīs [the Queen of Sheba] from a far distance in a short amount of time, as God, the exalted, states, quoting [the companion, and then Solomon ﷺ], "'I will bring it forth in the blink of an eye.' So when he saw it firm in his presence, he said, 'This is from the bounty of my Lord'" (27:40). Another proof is when Sāriyah[36] [d. 30/650], who was in Nahāwand [in western Iran], heard the statement of ʿUmar ؓ [d. 23/644], who was in Medina, "O Sāriyah! The mountain, the mountain!" Between the two was a distance of more than five hundred *farsakhs* [about fifteen hundred miles].[37] Also, the flowing of the Nile by ʿUmar's letter[38]

فَبَعْضُ ذَلِكَ مَرْدُودٌ وَبَعْضُهُ مُؤَوَّلٌ بِتَأْوِيلٍ صَحِيحٍ يَلِيقُ بِحَالِهِمْ . وَدَلَالَةُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّهُمْ حُجَجُ اللهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى عِبَادِهِ ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ ﴾ ، بَل لِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجَّةٌ ، فَلَوْ جَازَ مِنْهُمُ ارْتِكَابُ الذَّنْبِ لَمْ يُوثَقْ بِقَوْلِهِمْ فَلَا تَلْزَمُ الْحُجَّةُ . فَأَمَّا قَبْلَ الْوَحْيِ فَكَذَلِكَ عِنْدَ جَمِيعِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ وَالْخَوَارِجِ ، وَعِنْدَنَا يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ عَلَى سَبِيلِ النُّدْرَةِ ، ثُمَّ يَعُودُ حَالُهُمْ وَقْتَ الْإِرْسَالِ إِلَى الصَّلَاحِ وَالسَّدَادِ . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي إِلَى الرَّشَادِ .

القَوْلُ فِي كَرَامَاتِ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ

كَرَامَةُ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ جَائِزَةٌ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ ، وَكَذَا السِّحْرُ وَالْعَيْنُ مُتَحَقِّقٌ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لَهُمْ . وَحُجَّتُنَا فِي ذَلِكَ مِنْ حَيْثُ النَّقْلُ وَالْعَقْلُ .

أَمَّا النَّقْلُ ، مَا أَخْبَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْ صَاحِبِ سُلَيْمَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنَّهُ أَتَى بِعَرْشِ بِلْقِيسَ مِن مَسَافَةٍ بَعِيدَةٍ فِي زَمَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى خَبَرًا عَنْهُ ﴿ أَنَا۠ ءَاتِيكَ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَۚ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِندَهُۥ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّي ﴾ الآيَةَ ؛ وَكَذَا سَمِعَ سَارِيَةُ وَهُوَ بِنَهَاوَنْدَ قَوْلَ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَهُوَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ « يَا سَارِيَةُ الْجَبَلَ الْجَبَلَ » وَبَيْنَهُمَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْ خَمْسِمِائَةِ فَرْسَخٍ ؛ وَجَرَيَانُ النِّيلِ بِكِتَابِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ،

and Khālid's[39] [d. 21/642] drinking of poison[40] are well-known. In fact, what has been transmitted regarding the miracles of the generation (*tābiʿīn*) that immediately followed that of the Prophet's companions and the righteous of this community has reached a level that, were each individual report to be collected, the entirety would constitute incontestable multiple-chain transmission with respect to the possibility of saintly miracles.[41]

As for evidence based on reason, a saintly miracle is [merely] an act of God, the exalted, that contradicts His customary norm, with the consequence that the servant realizes the fruit of his worship, and [as a result,] his insight regarding the validity of his religion may increase.

If it is said: Based on this definition, if a miracle were to appear, it would resemble a prophetic miracle (*muʿjizah*), in which case a prophet could not be distinguished from a saint. We respond: That is not true, for indeed a prophetic miracle is conjoined to a *proclamation* of prophecy, and were a saint to claim that, he would immediately be rendered a disbeliever and hence no longer worthy of a miracle. Rather, the saint claims adherence to the way of a prophet,[42] and therefore *every* saintly miracle is without doubt [no more than] a miracle of the prophet whom the saint claims to be following. Thus there is no confusion at all between a saint and a prophet. And God is the One who guides.

ON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND RELATED MATTERS

The People of Truth assert that it is necessary for the citizenry to have a head of state (*imām*) to manage their affairs; the Prophet's companions reached unanimous consensus on this point, differing only in specification of the imam after the death of God's Messenger ﷺ. They then agreed on the imamate of Abū Bakr ؓ.[43]

وَشُرْبُ خَالِدٍ قَدَحًا مِنَ السُّمِّ مَشْهُورٌ، وَكَذَا مَا نُقِلَ مِنْ كَرَامَاتِ التَّابِعِينَ وَصَالِحِي هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بَلَغَ حَدًّا لَوْ جُمِعَتْ آحَادُهَا لَبَلَغَتْ حَدَّ التَّوَاتُرِ فِي جَوَازِ الْكَرَامَةِ.

وَأَمَّا الْعَقْلُ فَإِنَّهَا فِعْلُ اللهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى خِلَافِ مَجْرَى الْعَادَةِ لِيَعْرِفَ الْعَبْدُ ثَمَرَةَ الطَّاعَةِ وَتَزْدَادَ بَصِيرَتُهُ بِصِحَّةِ دِينِهِ.

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ ظَهَرَتِ الْكَرَامَةُ عَلَى هَذَا الْحَدِّ لَأَشْبَهَتِ الْمُعْجِزَةَ، فَلَا يُعْرَفُ النَّبِيُّ مِنَ الْوَلِيِّ. قُلْنَا لَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ، فَإِنَّ الْمُعْجِزَةَ تُقَارِنُ دَعْوَى النُّبُوَّةِ، وَلَوِ ادَّعَى الْوَلِيُّ ذَلِكَ لَكَفَرَ مِنْ سَاعَتِهِ، فَلَا يَبْقَى أَهْلًا لِلْكَرَامَةِ. بَلْ يَدَّعِي الْوَلِيُّ مُتَابَعَةَ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، فَلَا جَرَمَ أَن يَكُونَ كُلُّ كَرَامَةٍ لِلْوَلِيِّ مُعْجِزَةً لِلنَّبِيِّ الَّذِي يَدَّعِي الْوَلِيُّ مُتَابَعَتَهُ، فَلَا يَقَعُ الْاِشْتِبَاهُ بَيْنَ الْوَلِيِّ وَالنَّبِيِّ. وَاللهُ الْهَادِي.

الْقَوْلُ فِي الْإِمَامَةِ وَتَوَابِعِهَا

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ لَا بُدَّ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ إِمَامٍ يَقُومُ بِمَصَالِحِهِمْ، وَعَلَيْهِ إِجْمَاعُ الصَّحَابَةِ رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ، حَيْثُ اخْتَلَفُوا بَعْدَ وَفَاةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي تَعْيِينِ الْإِمَامِ، ثُمَّ اتَّفَقُوا عَلَى إِمَامَةِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

According to us, it is not permissible to establish two imams in one time period;[44] this position is contrary to that of some of the Shia, who state that in every age there are two imams, one hidden and another manifest. Likewise, the Karrāmiyyah deemed valid both the imamate of Muᶜāwiyah[45] and that of ᶜAlī ﷺ. This position is invalid, for it leads to the obligation of simultaneously obeying two persons in [potentially] contradictory rulings, which is impossible. Abū Bakr ﷺ alluded to this when he said, "Two swords cannot fit in one sheath."[46] ᶜAlī ﷺ also said of the companions of Muᶜāwiyah ﷺ [d. 60/680], "Our brethren have rebelled against us."[47] If the imamate is assigned to two persons, then [legally] the actual imam would be the one who received it first; if the two assignments were simultaneous, both would be annulled, whereby it would have to be renewed for either of the two, or for another person.

Its conditions are that he be a free, sane, adult male of Quraysh. According to us yet contrary to some of the Shia, it is not a condition that he be from Banū Hāshim, due to the generality of the Prophet's statement "The imams are from Quraysh."[48] Likewise [according to us] yet contrary to the esoterists, it is not a condition that he be infallible (*maᶜṣūm*). According to us, uprightness (*ᶜadālah*) is a condition of perfection [that is, what is ideal and most optimal], but according to [Imam] al-Shāfiᶜī ﷺ[49] [d. 204/820] it is a requirement for [the] permissibility and validity [of one's imamate]; therefore [according to us] it is disliked to assign the imamate to a corrupt person (*fāsiq*), though it is valid. If the imam commits an enormity, then according to us, he is deserving of impeachment but is not automatically impeached.[50] According to [Imam] al-Shāfiᶜī ﷺ, as well as the Mu'tazilites and Khawarij, he is automatically impeached.

وَلَا يَجُوزُ نَصْبُ إِمَامَيْنِ فِي زَمَانٍ وَاحِدٍ عِنْدَنَا ، خِلَافًا لِبَعْضِ الرَّوَافِضِ حَيْثُ قَالُوا إِنَّ فِي كُلِّ عَصْرٍ إِمَامَيْنِ : صَامِتٌ وَنَاطِقٌ ، وَكَذَا الْكَرَّامِيَّةُ صَحَّحُوا إِمَامَةَ مُعَاوِيَةَ مَعَ إِمَامَةِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا ، وَذَلِكَ بَاطِلٌ ، لِأَنَّهُ يُؤَدِّي إِلَى لُزُومِ طَاعَةِ شَخْصَيْنِ فِي أَحْكَامٍ مُتَضَادَّةٍ فِي زَمَانٍ وَاحِدٍ ، وَإِنَّهُ مُحَالٌ . وَإِلَيْهِ أَشَارَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ حَيْثُ قَالَ لَا يَصْلُحُ سَيْفَانِ فِي غِمْدٍ وَاحِدٍ ، وَكَذَا قَالَ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ لِأَصْحَابِ مُعَاوِيَةَ إِخْوَانُنَا بَغَوا عَلَيْنَا . وَلَوْ عُقِدَتِ الْإِمَامَةُ لِاثْنَيْنِ كَانَ الْإِمَامُ مَنْ عُقِدَ لَهُ أَوَّلًا ، وَلَوْ عُقِدَ لَهُمَا مَعًا بَطَلَا ، فَتُسْتَأْنَفُ لِأَحَدِهِمَا أَوْ لِغَيْرِهِمَا .

وَشَرْطُهَا أَن يَكُونَ ذَكَرًا حُرًّا بَالِغًا عَاقِلًا قُرَشِيًّا ، وَكَوْنُهُ مِن بَنِي هَاشِمٍ لَيْسَ بِشَرْطٍ عِنْدَنَا ، خِلَافًا لِبَعْضِ الرَّوَافِضِ ، لِعُمُومِ قَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « الْأَئِمَّةُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ » . وَكَذَا كَوْنُهُ مَعْصُومًا لَيْسَ بِشَرْطٍ ، خِلَافًا لِلْبَاطِنِيَّةِ . وَالْعَدَالَةُ شَرْطُ الْكَمَالِ عِنْدَنَا ، وَعِنْدَ الشَّافِعِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ شَرْطُ الْجَوَازِ وَالْانْعِقَادِ ، حَتَّى كُرِهَ تَقْلِيدُ الْإِمَامَةِ لِفَاسِقٍ وَلَكِنْ تَنْعَقِدُ . وَلَوِ ارْتَكَبَ الْإِمَامُ كَبِيرَةً يَسْتَحِقُّ الْعَزْلَ عِنْدَنَا وَلَا يَنْعَزِلُ ، وَعِنْدَ الشَّافِعِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ يَنْعَزِلُ ، وَكَذَا عِنْدَ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ وَالْخَوَارِجِ .

According to us though contrary to most of the Shia, the imamate of someone of lesser merit is valid despite the presence of someone of greater merit, for indeed ʿUmar ﷺ consigned the matter over to a council of six [see text below], despite knowing that some of them were better than others.

ON THE IMAMATE OF THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS

The first of them was Abū Bakr; he fulfilled every condition of the caliphate, and his merit surpassed that of all the Prophet's companions, who without exception agreed upon his caliphate. This serves as a definitive proof (*ḥujjah qāṭiʿah*), by which the claim that the Prophet ﷺ explicitly appointed ʿAlī—may God ennoble his face—is proven false, due to the Prophet's statement "My community will not agree on an error."[51] Moreover, it is well-known that ʿAlī himself pledged allegiance to [Abū Bakr] in the presence of a great throng of witnesses after having deemed it beneficial.[52] By the blessing (*barakah*) of his caliphate, then, things occurred that astounded the intellects of the Prophet's companions, and by the blessing of his acumen, disagreement was removed from the community, as we have explained in *Al-Kifāyah*.[53]

Then before his death, Abū Bakr appointed ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as caliph. It is narrated that when he saw his life nearing its end, he called for ʿUthmān[54] and dictated to him the writ of his covenant for ʿUmar, after which he sealed the document, brought it forth to the congregation, and ordered them to pledge allegiance to the one whose name was written therein.

وَتَنْعَقِدُ إِمَامَةُ الْمَفْضُولِ مَعَ قِيَامِ الْفَاضِلِ عِنْدَنَا ، خِلَافًا لِأَكْثَرِ الرَّوَافِضِ ، فَإِنَّ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ جَعَلَ الْأَمْرَ شُورَى بَيْنَ سِتَّةِ نَفَرٍ مَعَ عِلْمِهِ أَنَّ بَعْضَهُمْ أَفْضَلُ مِن بَعْضٍ .

فَصْلٌ فِي إِمَامَةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ

أَوَّلُهُمْ أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ، وَكَانَ مُسْتَجْمِعًا لِشَرَائِطِ الْخِلَافَةِ مُفَضَّلًا عَلَى جَمِيعِ الصَّحَابَةِ ، وَقَدِ اتَّفَقَتِ الصَّحَابَةُ عَلَى خِلَافَتِهِ ، وَذَلِكَ حُجَّةٌ قَاطِعَةٌ وَيَبْطُلُ بِذَلِكَ دَعْوَى مَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ نَصَّ عَلَى عَلِيٍّ كَرَّمَ اللهُ وَجْهَهُ ، لِقَوْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « لَا تَجْتَمِعُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى الضَّلَالَةِ » ، وَقَدِ اشْتَهَرَ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ بَايَعَهُ عَلَى رُؤُوسِ الْأَشْهَادِ بَعْدَ أَن رَأَى ذَلِكَ مَصْلَحَةً . وَظَهَرَ مِن بَرَكَةِ خِلَافَتِهِ أُمُورٌ تَحَيَّرَتْ فِيهَا عُقُولُ الصَّحَابَةِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ ، وَارْتَفَعَ بِيُمْنِ رَأْيِهِ الْخِلَافُ مِن بَيْنِ الْأُمَّةِ ، كَمَا شَرَحْنَاهُ فِي الْكِفَايَةِ .

ثُمَّ اسْتَخْلَفَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَبْلَ وَفَاتِهِ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ، رُوِيَ أَنَّهُ لَمَّا أَيِسَ مِنْ حَيَاتِهِ دَعَا عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَأَمْلَى عَلَيْهِ كِتَابَ عَهْدِهِ لِعُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ، فَلَمَّا كَتَبَ خَتَمَ الصَّحِيفَةَ وَأَخْرَجَهَا إِلَى النَّاسِ وَأَمَرَهُمْ أَن يُبَايِعُوا لِمَنْ فِي الصَّحِيفَةِ ،

So they did so, and when it was passed to ʿAlī ﵁, he said, "We pledge allegiance to the person whose name is in it, even if it be ʿUmar ﵁."[55] The Prophet's companions then agreed to his caliphate.[56] He followed in the footsteps of Abū Bakr ﵁, dispatched armies, and established the foundational principles of Islamic legal reasoning, such that by his great efforts, God, the exalted, subdued disbelief and corruption.

ʿUmar ﵁ was then martyred; [before his death,] he left the issue of selecting the caliph to a council of six—namely, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf[57] [d. 32/652], Ṭalḥah[58] [d. 36/656], al-Zubayr[59] [d. 36/656], and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ[60] [d. 55/675] ﵃. Five of them consigned the matter over to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf ﵁ and were content with his decision; so he chose ʿUthmān ﵁ and pledged allegiance to him in the presence of a group of the Prophet's companions. The companions in turn pledged allegiance to him, submitted to his orders, and prayed the Friday and Eid prayers behind him for the entire term of his caliphate; this entails their unanimous consensus (*ijmāʿ*) on the validity of his caliphate. Anything transmitted whose outward meaning would seem to imply insolence toward him is either a pure fabrication, or is to be interpreted properly so as to befit his state,[61] as such statements cannot contradict a definitive proof (*ḥujjah qāṭiʿah*).

Then ʿUthmān ﵁ was martyred, and the matter was left undecided until the Prophet's eminent senior companions, from both the emigrants and helpers, gathered and sought ʿAlī's acceptance of the caliphate, making an oath to him so that he would accept it. So those present among the senior companions ﵃ pledged their allegiance to him.[62]

فَبَايَعُوا حَتَّى مَرَّتْ بِعَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ فَقَالَ بَايَعْنَا لِمَنْ فِيهَا وَإِنْ كَانَ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ . ثُمَّ اتَّفَقَتِ الصَّحَابَةُ عَلَى خِلَافَتِهِ ، وَاتَّبَعَ آثَارَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَنَفَّذَ الْجُيُوشَ وَأَصَّلَ الْاِجْتِهَادَ ، حَتَّى قَمَعَ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِسَعْيِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفَسَادَ .

ثُمَّ اسْتُشْهِدَ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَتَرَكَ أَمْرَ الْخِلَافَةِ شُورَى بَيْنَ سِتَّةٍ : عُثْمَانَ وَعَلِيٍّ وَعَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ وَطَلْحَةَ وَالزُّبَيْرِ وَسَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ . ثُمَّ فَوَّضَ الْأَمْرَ خَمْسَتُهُمْ إِلَى عَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ وَرَضُوا بِحُكْمِهِ ، فَاخْتَارَ هُوَ عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَبَايَعَ لَهُ بِمَحْضَرٍ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ ، فَبَايَعُوا لَهُ وَانْقَادُوا لِأَوَامِرِهِ وَصَلَّوا مَعَهُ الْجُمَعَ وَالْأَعْيَادَ مُدَّةَ خِلَافَتِهِ ، فَكَانَ إِجْمَاعًا مِنْهُمْ عَلَى صِحَّةِ خِلَافَتِهِ . وَمَا نُقِلَ مِنْهُ مِمَّا يُوهِمُ ظَاهِرُهُ الطَّعْنَ فِيهِ فَبَعْضُهُ افْتِرَاءٌ عَلَيْهِ وَبَعْضُهُ مُؤَوَّلٌ بِتَأْوِيلٍ صَحِيحٍ يَلِيقُ بِحَالِهِ ، فَلَا يُعَارِضُ مَا هُوَ حُجَّةٌ قَاطِعَةٌ .

ثُمَّ اسْتُشْهِدَ عُثْمَانُ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ وَتُرِكَ الْأَمْرُ مُهْمَلًا حَتَّى اجْتَمَعَ كِبَارُ الصَّحَابَةِ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ وَالْتَمَسُوا مِنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَبُولَ الْخِلَافَةِ وَأَقْسَمُوا عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى قَبِلَهَا ، فَبَايَعَهُ مَنْ حَضَرَ مِنْ كِبَارِ الصَّحَابَةِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ .

Those companions who opposed or fought him did so based on reasoned estimation (*ẓann*) and independent scholarly judgment (*ijtihād*). Yet according to Sunni orthodoxy, ʿAlī ﷺ alone was correct, and he was the best of his time and the most deserving of the imamate.[63] Furthermore, it is related that [the opponents of ʿAlī ﷺ] renounced their position and felt remorse for what they did.[64] The prophetic caliphate ended with ʿAlī ﷺ, for he was martyred thirty years after the death of God's Messenger ﷺ, who had said, "The caliphate after me will be for thirty years."[65]

According to Sunni orthodoxy, the order of their merit is according to the order of their terms for a caliphate. As for the merit of their progeny, some scholars maintain that we do not prefer anyone after the Prophet's companions, except based on sacred knowledge and piety. Others state that we rank their progeny based on the rank of their forefathers, except for the progeny of Fāṭimah[66] ﷺ [d. 11/632], for their rank surpasses that of the progeny of all the Prophet's companions, due to their proximity to the Messenger of God ﷺ.

The prophetic way (sunnah) is for every person to withhold his tongue from [criticizing] any of the Prophet's companions, and to not mention them except in the most beautiful of manners, always interpreting their acts in a manner befitting their righteousness and uprightness, due to the Prophet's statement "[Fear] God, [fear] God, [and beware of Him] regarding my companions! Do not take them as targets [of your blame] after my death. Whoever loves them, it is because of his love for me that he loves them; whoever hates them, it is because of his hate for me that he hates them."[67]

وَمَنْ خَالَفَهُ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ كَانَ عَنْ ظَنٍّ وَاجْتِهَادٍ ، وَعَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ هُوَ الْمُصِيبُ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَأَفْضَلُ أَهْلِ عَصْرِهِ وَأَوْلَاهُمْ بِالْإِمَامَةِ ، وَرُوِيَ أَنَّهُمْ رَجَعُوا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَنَدِمُوا عَلَى مَا صَنَعُوا . وَخُتِمَتْ خِلَافَةُ النُّبُوَّةِ بِعَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ ، فَإِنَّهُ اسْتُشْهِدَ عَلَى رَأْسِ ثَلَاثِينَ سَنَةً مِن مَوْتِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، وَقَدْ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « الْخِلَافَةُ بَعْدِي ثَلَاثُونَ سَنَةً » .

وَتَرْتِيبُ فَضْلِهِمْ عَلَى تَرْتِيبِ الْخِلَافَةِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ ، وَأَمَّا فَضْلُ أَوْلَادِهِمْ قَالَ بَعْضُ الْعُلَمَاءِ لَا نُفَضِّلُ أَحَدًا بَعْدَ الصَّحَابَةِ إِلَّا بِالْعِلْمِ وَالتَّقْوَى ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ نُفَضِّلُ أَوْلَادَهُمْ بِفَضْلِ آبَائِهِمْ إِلَّا أَوْلَادَ فَاطِمَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا ، فَإِنَّهُمْ يُفَضَّلُونَ عَلَى أَوْلَادِ جَمِيعِ الصَّحَابَةِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ لِقُرْبِهِمْ مِن رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ .

وَمِنَ السُّنَّةِ أَن يَكُفَّ كُلُّ أَحَدٍ لِسَانَهُ عَنْ جَمِيعِ الصَّحَابَةِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ ، وَلَا يَذْكُرَهُمْ إِلَّا بِالْجَمِيلِ ، وَيَحْمِلَ أَمْرَهُمْ عَلَى الصَّلَاحِ وَالسَّدَادِ ، لِقَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ « اللهَ اللهَ فِي أَصْحَابِي ، لَا تَتَّخِذُوهُمْ غَرَضًا مِن بَعْدِي ، فَمَنْ أَحَبَّهُمْ فَبِحُبِّي أَحَبَّهُمْ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَهُمْ فَبِبُغْضِي أَبْغَضَهُمْ » ،

For indeed, they alone gave victory to God's religion and alone were chosen to keep the company of the Messenger of God ﷺ. May God send blessings and peace upon him, and may He be well pleased with them all. And God is the One who guides.[68]

إِذْ هُمُ النَّاصِرُونَ لِدِينِ اللهِ الْمُخْتَارُونَ لِصُحْبَةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَرَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي .

Annotations to *Prophets, Miracles, and Early Islam*

1 Imam al-Farhārī cites Imam al-Ṣābūnī in his *Al-Kifāyah* as clarifying "some of them" as "a group of our fellow Māturīdīs" (*Al-Nibrās*, 269).

2 Imam al-Taftāzānī clarifies that this position is not that of the Muʿtazilites, whose position is that sending messengers is incumbent *upon God*, the exalted, which is deemed unsound by Sunnis. Rather, this position is that sending messengers *necessarily follows* from the implications of divine wisdom—"wisdom" referring to "benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) and a praiseworthy outcome (*ʿāqibah ḥamīdah*)"—since as Imam al-Farhārī notes, "the action of the all-wise will not contravene wisdom."

As stated in the text above, this differs also from the opinion of most Sunnis, which is the opinion of Imam al-Ashʿarī, that sending messengers is a logical possibility *with equivalence of each side* (sending or not sending). See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id*, 312–13. Imam al-Farhārī comments, "[This is the opinion of] most Ashʿarī scholars, who state that the intellect does not designate good and evil, and that God, most glorious, does whatever He chooses, by His sheer will and without any inciting aim. The commentator [Imam al-Taftāzānī] has preferred the Māturīdī opinion in this discussion."

Imam al-Farhārī explains, "The upshot is that 'necessity' here is 'customary' (*ʿādī*), meaning that the divine custom [that is,

God's normal pattern of action] is one of sending messengers, because divine wisdom entails it—that is, renders its occurrence preponderant despite the logical possibility of not doing it. The Māturīdī scholars admit this type of necessity and linguistically express it in a manner that differs from the Mu'tazilite expression, saying, 'This is a necessity *from* God, the exalted (*wujūb min Allāh*), not *upon* Him (*wujūb ʿalā Allāh*), so as to maintain proper etiquette." See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 268–69.

3 Some of the reasons for their position are: (1) Sending messengers would necessitate a divine statement "I have sent you" to the messenger, yet it is possible for one to hear that from jinn. The response is that it is logically possible for God, the exalted, to establish for the messenger a clear sign of true prophecy, and/or create in the messenger innate knowledge (*ʿilm ḍarūrī*) of his messengership. (2) If Angel Gabriel ﷺ were a body, then all people would see him, and if he were immaterial, then no one could possibly see him. The response is that the creator of vision is God, the exalted, so it is conceivable that He unveil the angel to just the messenger, while keeping him veiled from all others. (3) Moral responsibility (*taklīf*) is harmful to people, not beneficial. The response is that its burden entails slight difficulty, which ultimately results in tremendous and perpetual benefit. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 269.

4 The term *emanation* used here differs from the Neoplatonic concept of emanation, which negates the divine attribute of will. According to Sunnis, God's commands and prohibitions reflect His decisions and rulings for His servants.

5 The person would then be unable to, for example, earn a livelihood, spend time with his family, or manage his affairs. He would constantly be investigating various actions and their end results so as to ascertain whether the outcomes are beneficial or harmful; as a result, most of his worldly affairs from which he derives benefit would be neglected.

6 Imam al-Farhārī comments, "God's customary pattern (*ʿādah*) is what He creates repeatedly [such as laws of nature]. What He does exceptionally that differs from the pattern is a break or contravention of the pattern [such as miracles, which defy laws of nature]" (*Al-Nibrās*, 271).

Sunni theologians mention several types of miracles: (1) the prophetic miracle (*muʿjizah*), which is accompanied by a claim of prophecy, which it confirms, along with an implicit or explicit challenge of replication, which deniers prove incapable of; (2) the preparatory miracle (*irhāṣ*), which occurs for prophets before they receive revelation, so as to prepare them for the message, such as the covering of clouds over the Prophet ﷺ in his youth, the greeting of him by trees and stones, etc.; (3) the saintly miracle (*karāmah*), which occurs for a righteous believer (*walī*) who follows his prophet and hence lacks any claim of prophecy; (4) the miracle of assistance (*maʿūnah*), which occurs for a layperson among believers who is neither a saint nor corrupt, so as to relieve him from a distress or calamity; (5) the miracle of "being taken to perdition in small, unnoticeable degrees" (*istidrāj*), which occurs for a corrupt sinful person (*fāsiq*) or disbeliever (kafir), in correspondence to his wishes, due to the divine plotting against him, such that the person is distracted with his gifts and therefore forgets to repent; (6) the miracle of sheer debasement (*ihānah*), which occurs to wretched people contrary to their wishes, such as with a false prophet to belie him (as with Musaylimah the Liar, who blew spittle in the eye of someone with a defective eye, seeking to cure it as a display of prophethood, only to cause the person's other healthy eye to go blind); and according to some, (7) sorcery (*siḥr*), which occurs for vile souls, who make use of specific spells while being aided by devils. Yet many theologians do not deem sorcery as a break of God's customary pattern, since anyone who takes the means of learning those spells will normally learn sorcery. This latter type also includes fortune-telling (*kihānah*),

which is to predict the future based on what is heard from jinn. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 271–72; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 311–13.

7 Imam al-Taftāzānī explains, "Were it not for the divine support [to prophets] of granting miracles, it would not be incumbent on people to believe in prophets, and true prophets could not be distinguished from imposters. So when a miracle occurs, the observer becomes certain of his truthfulness, by way of customary occurrence, in that God, the exalted, creates in the observer self-evident knowledge immediately after the miracle, even though His not creating that knowledge is in and of itself possible" (*Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, 316).

Imam al-Farhārī comments,

> Intellectuals disagree as to how miracles signify the truthfulness of prophets: (1) the philosophers deem it a signification by necessity, meaning that it is impossible for anyone to doubt their truthfulness after a miracle, because the mind is prepared for that certainty; and [a general principle of their Neoplatonist philosophy is that] emanation from the emanating source, upon something prepared, is a metaphysical necessity [which in this case refers to emanation of certainty from its divine source upon the prepared human mind]; (2) the Muʿtazilites consider the signification to occur by causation [meaning the miracle is a cause, and the observer's certainty of the prophet's truthfulness is its effect], just as movement of a key ensues from movement of the hand that holds it; and (3) the Ashʿarī scholars regard the signification to occur by God's customary pattern [since Sunnis hold that no effect occurs in the cosmos except that God is its Creator, apparent secondary causes being mere loci or occasions of the divine fiat. Yet God does repeatedly create the same effect with its apparent means, which is His customary pattern of action. This is what Imam al-Taftāzānī meant above with his words "by way of customary occurrence"]. (*Al-Nibrās*, 273)

8 He is Abū Thumāmah Musaylimah b. Thumāmah b. Kabīr al-Ḥanafī (meaning from the Arabian tribe Banū Ḥanīfah) al-Wā'ilī, a false prophet (*mutanabbī*) from Najd. A common Arab idiom is "More lying than Musaylimah." He was killed on 12/633, after his army lost to the army of the Prophet's companion Khālid b. al-Walīd ﷺ. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 7:226.

9 See Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī, *Al-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah: Insān al-ʿuyūn fī sīrat al-Amīn al-Ma'mūn*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 1:3–31; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qasṭallānī, *Al-Mawāhib al-laduniyyah bi al-minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyyah*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-Shāmī, 4 vols., 2nd ed. (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 2004), 1:90–94; Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-mawāhib al-laduniyyah bi al-minaḥ al-Muḥammadiyyah*, 8 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Azhariyyah al-Miṣriyyah, 1907), 1:70–80.

10 Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Aṣbahānī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwah*, ed. Muḥammad Rawwās Qalʿajī and ʿAbd al-Barr ʿAbbās, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1991), 71–94.

11 He is Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet ﷺ, leader of the believers (*amīr al-mu'minīn*), and fourth rightly guided caliph in Islam. He was martyred in the year 40/661. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978), 2:507–9. For his report alluded to in the text above, see appendix B.

12 He is Hind b. Abī Hālah al-Tamīmī, stepchild of the Prophet ﷺ since his mother was the Prophet's wife Khadījah bt. Khuwaylid. He was martyred in the Battle of the Camel in the year 36/656. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 3:611. For his report alluded to in the text above, see appendix B.

13 She is Umm Maʿbad ʿĀtikah bt. Khālid al-Khuzāʿiyyah, at whose home the Prophet ﷺ stopped during his emigration (*hijrah*) and whose sheep he milked. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 4:497. For her report alluded to in the text above, see appendix B.

14 He is Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Quḥāfah ʿUthmān b. ʿĀmir b. ʿAmr b. Kaʿb b. Saʿd b. Taym b. Murrah b. Kaʿb b. Lu'ayy, al-Taymī al-Qurashī al-Ṣiddīq, the vicegerent of God's Messenger ﷺ (*khalīfat rasūl Allāh*) and the first adult male to believe in him. He died in the year 13/634. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:341.

15 Bekir Topaloğlu notes,

> I could not find a text with this wording [in any primary sources]. However, it states in *Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, "God's Messenger ﷺ used to say in what has reached me, 'I never invited anyone to Islam save that there was in him some hesitation and consideration, except for Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥāfah. The moment I mentioned it to him, he had no doubt or reluctance.'" After relating this hadith, Ibn Kathīr [d. 744/1373] comments, "For indeed, Ibn Isḥāq [d. 151/768] and others have mentioned that he was a companion of the Prophet ﷺ before revelation began, so he knew of the Prophet's truthfulness, trustworthiness, excellent nature, and noble character, which precluded dishonesty regarding people; so how could he possibly lie about the divine? That is why, by the Prophet's merely mentioning that God had sent him, Abū Bakr rushed to believe in him, without doubt or hesitation." ʿAbd al-Malik b. Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 4 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Ḥijāzī, 1963), 1:165; Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar b. Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa al-nihāyah*, #892, 226v.

16 He is Abū Yūsuf ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām b. al-Ḥārith, the Prophet's Jewish companion ﵁, who embraced Islam when the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Medina. He died in the year 43/663. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:320.

17 Sunan al-Tirmidhī. See al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī, *ʿĀriḍat al-aḥwadhī bi sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, ed. Hishām Samīr al-Bukhārī, 14 vols., 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1994), 9:300.

18 He is Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Rawāḥah b. Thaʿlabah al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, the Prophet's companion and famous poet. He was one of the appointed leaders at the Battle of Mu'tah, in which he was martyred in the year 8/629. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:306.

19 al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:307.

20 Qur'an 54:1; Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 6:631; Muhammad Taqi Usmani, *Takmilat fatḥ al-Mulhim bi sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Muslim*, 6 vols. (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2006), 6:71–74.

21 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal*, 19:165; Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Mājah, *Al-Sunan*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arna'ūṭ et al., 5 vols. (Beirut: al-Risālah al-ʿĀlamiyyah, 2009), 5:157. According to this narration, the Angel Gabriel came one day to the Prophet, who was sitting in Mecca while in a sad state and smeared in blood. When the Angel asked what had happened, the Prophet informed him that his people had beaten him. Gabriel asked if he should show him a wondrous sign, and when the Prophet responded in the affirmative, he told the Prophet to summon to him a tree, which then uprooted itself and walked to the Prophet and returned back upon command. God's Emissary then said, "That suffices me." The contemporary hadith scholar Shaykh Shuʿayb al-Arna'ūṭ comments, "Its chain of narration is strong."

22 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See Usmani, *Takmilat fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 4:279; al-Aṣbahānī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwah*, 397. The Prophet said, "Verily, I know a stone in Mecca that used to give me greetings of peace

(*salām*) before I was sent [as God's Emissary—that is, before revelation began]. Verily, I know it right now."

23 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Sunan al-Tirmidhī; Musnad Aḥmad. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 6:601–3; al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī, *ʿĀriḍat al-aḥwadhī*, 2:293; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal*, 10:127; Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), 1:622. Ibn ʿUmar ﷺ relates that the Prophet ﷺ used to give sermons while leaning against a palm trunk, but when the pulpit was made for him, he moved there for his sermons. So the palm trunk cried loudly like a child, out of yearning for the Prophet ﷺ, until he approached it and wiped it with his blessed hand until it calmed down. Some narrations add that he embraced it and that had he not calmed it down with his touch, it would have continued crying until the Day of Arising, out of sadness at being far from God's Emissary ﷺ. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149) states that over ten of the Prophet's companions relate the yearning of the palm trunk, through separate rigorously authenticated narrations, such that the testimony of its yearning reaches a level of incontestable multiple-chain transmission.

24 al-Aṣbahānī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwah*, 380–86.

25 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 10:244; Usmani, *Takmilat fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 4:183–84; ʿAbd al-Malik b. Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Ra'ūf Saʿd, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1975), 3:218. A Jewish woman from Khaybar poisoned a roasted sheep and then gifted it to God's Messenger ﷺ, who took the foreleg and ate from it, and a group of the Prophet's companions were present with him. Suddenly the Prophet ﷺ told them, "Lift your hands." He summoned the woman and asked her, "Did you poison this sheep?" She replied, "Who told you?" He said, "This [portion] in my hand told me," indicating the very foreleg. She said, "Yes [I poisoned it]." "Why did you do that?" he asked. She said, "I said to myself, 'If he is a true prophet it shall not harm him, and otherwise we shall be

relieved of him.'" So God's Messenger ﷺ pardoned her, taking no retribution for her attempted murder.

26 al-Aṣbahānī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwah*, 168.

27 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 12:124–26; Usmani, *Takmilat fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 6:126.

28 Many Qur'anic verses foretold of future events, which then transpired, such as 28:85, 9:33, and others. There are also innumerable well-known narrations of God's Messenger ﷺ about future events that occurred, such as "The earth was folded over for me, so I was shown its eastern and western provinces; the dominion of my community shall reach what was folded over for me" (Sunan Abī Dāwūd; Sunan Ibn Mājah). Indeed, the Islamic empire historically stretched from beyond the Oxus River and even into the Far East, to as far west as Morocco and Spain. The Prophet ﷺ also said to ʿAmmār b. Yāsir ؓ (d. 37/657), "The transgressing party shall kill you" (al-Māwardī in *Aʿlām al-nubuwwah*); he informed ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī that they would be martyred; and he foretold, "The caliphate after me will be for thirty years" (Sunan Abī Dāwūd; Sunan al-Tirmidhī). He told of dozens of signs of the end of time, most of which have occurred. Overall, there are countless narrations of future events that transpired as prophesied. See al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 42v. [BT, with slight modification]

29 He is Abū ʿAdī Ḥātim b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṭā'ī, a poet in pre-Islamic Arabia. He became well-known for his bravery and generosity, such that people adopted the saying "the generosity of Ḥātim." He died in the year 578 CE. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:151.

30 He is Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nuʿmān b. Thābit al-Kūfī, first of the four imams of Sunni orthodoxy and eponym of the Hanafi school. He was one of the most eminent jurists and expert scholars of Islam. Imam al-Shāfiʿī said of him, "All people are dependents of

Abū Ḥanīfah in jurisprudence." He died in the year 150/767. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 8:36.

31 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 12:112.

32 The Negus is Aṣḥamah b. Abḥar, ruler of Abyssinia; his Arabic name is ʿAṭiyyah. He gave asylum to a group of the Prophet's companions who fled from the Meccan persecution, and he became Muslim during the Prophet's time but did not emigrate to him. He died in the year 9/630, although there is difference of opinion on the date. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 1:109; Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, 1:293.

33 The author states that this view is based on their erroneous principle that any disobedience (*ʿiṣyān*) entails disbelief (*kufr*). Al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 45r. [BT]

Regarding the Islamic tenet of prophetic infallibility with regard to disbelief, both before and after revelation, the Maliki al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ states, "The historical narrations of this are abundant and mutually reinforce one another; no report exists of a disbeliever becoming a prophet. Some have adduced as evidence that [had any prophet ever been a disbeliever,] it would serve as a proof for disbelievers against all prophets." Al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 283.

And the theologian Imam al-Khayālī (d. 861/1457) states, "[This tenet is categorically true] since were it possible [for a prophet to be a disbeliever], the signification of the prophetic miracle (*dalālat al-muʿjizah*) would be rendered null, which is impossible." Cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 326.

34 After citing the position mentioned above (namely, the impossibility for prophets to deliberately commit enormities), Imam al-Taftāzānī asserts in his commentary on al-Nasafī's creed that "most theologians" deemed it possible for prophets to commit

enormities out of inattention (*sahwan*). However, Imam al-Farhārī comments,

> The preferred opinion is that this is impossible, as stated in both [al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's (d. 816/1413)] *Sharḥ al-mawāqif* and [al-Taftāzānī's] *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*. Indeed, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ cites scholarly consensus that prophets cannot possibly commit enormities, without distinguishing between 'deliberately' (*ʿamdan*) and 'out of inattention' (*sahwan*) (*Al-Nibrās*, 283).

And, specifically regarding Imam al-Taftāzānī's aforementioned statement, it is noteworthy that his *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* is a later (and arguably more authoritative) work than his commentary on al-Nasafī's creed.

In his commentary on al-Nasafī's creed, Imam al-Taftāzānī goes on to say,

> As for minor sins, the majority deem it possible when deliberate, contrary to [the Muʿtazilite] al-Jubbā'ī and his followers; while there is agreement that it is possible if out of inattention, an exception being a minor sin [whether deliberate or out of inattention] that indicates lack of nobility (283).

But Imam al-Farhārī notes,

> The commentator [al-Taftāzānī] here has followed the opinion of the author of *Al-Mawāqif* [al-Ījī (d. 756/1355)], yet it is inadequate. This is because the impossibility of deliberately committing minor sins is the preferred view of the Ashʿarī school, as is noted in the *Sharḥ al-mawāqif* [by al-Jurjānī]. In fact, it is the preferred position of the commentator himself [al-Taftāzānī] in his works *Al-Tahdhīb* and *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* (283).

35 Many Ashʿarī scholars and most Sufis maintain that prophetic infallibility negates the committing of *any* sin, major or minor, even out of inattention, or even an act that is suboptimal (*khilāf al-awlā*), whether before or after revelation, and even during childhood. See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 282.

36 He is Sāriyah b. Zunaym b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jābir, the Prophet's companion, poet, and military leader of successful conquests. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb made him leader of an army that he sent to Persia in the year 23 AH. He died in the year 30/650. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:2.

37 Related by al-Bayhaqī, Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, and others. See Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqah fī al-radd ʿalā ahl al-bidaʿ wa al-zandaqah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1999), 155.

38 Related by Abū al-Shaykh. See al-Haytamī, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqah*, 156. The reference is to an incident when the Nile River ceased to flow during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ﵁. He wrote a letter to the river commanding it to flow again, to which it immediately responded after the letter was cast therein. The letter read, "From the servant of God, ʿUmar, the leader of the faithful, to the Nile of Egypt. To proceed: If you flow from your own accord, then do not flow. But, if it is God alone who makes you flow, then I ask God, the one (*al-wāḥid*), the overpowering (*al-qahhār*), to cause you to flow."

39 He is Khālid b. al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah, the Prophet's companion and great military conqueror. He became Muslim before the Conquest of Mecca in the year 7 AH. He died in the year 21/642. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 1:413.

40 Related by Abū Yaʿlā (d. 458/1066), al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235/849), Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, and others. See al-Aṣbahānī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwah*, 445. The reference is to when Khālid b. al-Walīd reached al-Ḥīrah, an ancient city in Iraq south of Kufa, and a man came out with poison and informed him of it. Khālid asked for it and, having recited God's name in a prophetic supplication for protection, drank it. He passed out and sweated profusely, only to regain consciousness unharmed. The man rushed back to his

people—the Banī Ghassān—and urged them to peacefully reconcile, which they did.

41 Imam Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī states in his celebrated creed,

> Saintly miracles are real. / They manifest upon a saint by way of defying laws of nature, as, for example, by traversing large distances in a short time; the appearance of food, drink, or clothing when needed; walking upon water / or flying in the air; being spoken to by inanimate objects or animals; / the warding off of impending calamity; being given sufficient help when in distress from enemies; and other similar wonders. / In reality though, it is still a miracle of the messenger whose community the saint is from, since a saint's miracle (*karāmah*) indicates that he is a saint, and one can never reach sainthood without being accomplished in piety [see following note], the basis of which is belief in the prophethood of one's prophet. (al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 338–42)

Examples abound. Safīnah, the freed slave of the Prophet ﷺ, was once shipwrecked on a remote island and lost his way in a forest, only to encounter a ferocious lion in front of him. He exclaimed, "O lion! I am the freed slave of God's Messenger ﷺ!" The lion calmed down, nudged the Prophet's blessed companion with its shoulder back to the road, and in the words of Safīnah, "hummed, as if it were bidding me farewell." See al-Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrak*; the narration is confirmed as authentic by al-Dhahabī. Abū al-Khayr al-Aqṭaʿ (d. 347/958), a fourth-/tenth-century Sufi who was known for the prophetic virtues of gentleness, loyalty, and sincerity—and noted by his biographers specifically as "unique in his time in 'reliance on God' (*tawakkul*)"—would regularly be visited by wild animals and predatory beasts, who would find comfort and solace with him. When questioned about this, he would respond, "Dogs and beasts find comfort with one another," thereby evincing the very humility essential to sainthood.

See ʿAbd Allāh al-Talīdī, *Tahdhīb al-khaṣāʾiṣ al-nabawiyyah al-kubrā*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyyah, 1990), 258–59; and Muṣṭafā al-ʿArūsī, *Natāʾij al-afkār al-qudsiyyah fī bayān maʿānī sharḥ al-risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Bulāq, 1873), 1:193.

There are innumerable incidents like these recorded in the biographical literature of Islam, from the earliest generations down to contemporary masters. As such, the shared phenomenon of "the occurrence of saintly miracles" is transmitted by multiple chains incontestably, even if each particular type is transmitted through mere single-chain reports.

Moreover, there is explicit reference to them in the Qurʾan, such as the story of Āṣaf (cited in the text above), who brought forth the throne of Bilqīs at the behest of Solomon ﷺ in less than the blink of an eye, for Āṣaf knew God's greatest name and called upon Him thereby (27:40); or like Mary's ﷺ having provision directly from God, the exalted, which her caretaker, Zachariah ﷺ, found with her every time he entered her quarters (3:37). Such verses are interpreted literally because saintly miracles entail no logical absurdity. Thus, their logical possibility, scriptural affirmation, and incontestable transmission render saintly miracles factual, such that they are mentioned in Sunni creeds as a point of belief.

Finally, not only has this reality lasted throughout the history of Islam up to today, but there has generally been a higher incidence in later centuries than earlier ones, regarding which Imam al-Ṣāwī (d. 1241/1825) notes, "This is due to the relative weakness of faith in later times; therefore, that weakness had to be fortified by saintly miracles so that people once again believed in the existence of the righteous. As for the early period, their conviction followed directly from the scale of the sacred law" (*Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Bizam, 3rd ed. [Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2003], 346).

42 Sunni theologians define a saint as "one who knows God and His attributes, based on human capacity; who is consistent in

obedience and avoids disobedience, meaning not that he never commits a wrong, for he is not infallible like prophets, but that he does not sin without repenting from it; and who turns away from indulgence in even lawful pleasures and desires, although he may still partake of them, especially with an intention to gain strength for worship." Imam al-Jurjānī adds, "while being oblivious to his own self," highlighting the distance between such a person and his own selfish interests, antics, and pretensions (al-Maydānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah*, 104).

He is termed a *saint* (*walī*), derived from the verbs "to undertake" (*tawallā*) and "to be consistent or consecutive" (*tawālā*), because the saint consistently undertakes service and devotion to God, the exalted, without interspersing it with deliberate sin, while God, the exalted, consistently undertakes all his affairs, not for a moment leaving the saint to rely upon himself or upon anyone in creation.

Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) said, "The saint is one whose deeds are consistently aligned [with what pleases God, the exalted—that is, the sacred law]" (al-ʿArūsī, *Natāʾij al-afkār al-qudsiyyah*, 3:215). Imam al-Ṣāwī underscores a most salient trait of sainthood with his statement: "A necessary condition to be a saint is to have beautiful reliance on one's Creator" (*Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 344). The blessings of such people are immense, as Yaḥyā b. Muʿādh al-Rāzī (d. 258/872) states: "The saint is the sweet basil (*rayḥān*) of God on earth, which the masters of sincerity (*ṣiddīqīn*) smell, so that his fragrance reaches their hearts, whereby they yearn for their Lord and increase in devotion, each in accordance to his innate traits" (al-ʿArūsī, *Natāʾij al-afkār al-qudsiyyah*, 3:217). See also al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 364.

43 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 7:19–20, 12:144–45, 13:206.

44 There is consensus among contemporary Sunni scholars that the various governments in today's Muslim lands are legitimate

governments. Those scholars reside under those governments and obey their laws, while continuing the transmission of sacred knowledge, the faithful practice of it, and the general invitation of others to virtue and justice.

45 He is Muʿāwiyah b. Abī Sufyān Ṣakhr b. Ḥarb b. Umayyah b. ʿAbd Shams b. ʿAbd Manāf al-Qurashī al-Umawī, the Prophet's companion and founder of the Umayyad dynasty in the Levant. He is deemed one of the geniuses of the Arabs. He died in the year 60/680. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 3:433.

46 The statement was made by ʿUmar ﷺ, not Abū Bakr ﷺ, on the day of the Saqīfah (the room of Banī Sāʿidah, where the people first gave allegiance to Abū Bakr ﷺ), in response to the suggestion of the anṣar that the community have one Medinan leader and one Meccan leader. See Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 11 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1986), 8:144–45.

47 Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāmah, 26 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2006), 21:368–69.

48 Anas b. Mālik ﷺ (d. 91/710) relates that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The imams are from Quraysh: when they are given leadership, they prove just; when they make a covenant, they fulfill it; and when their mercy is sought, they prove merciful." See Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 10 vols. (Hyderabad: Majlis Dā'irat al-Maʿārif, 1926), 8:144.

Commenting on the narration "The imams are from Quraysh," Imam al-Kawtharī (d. 1371/1952) states,

> To proceed, if the hadith were authentic, Abū Bakr ﷺ would have used it as evidence at the Saqīfah, since it would have been a definitive proof in the context of a dispute. In fact, many hadith experts deem the fact that none of the Prophet's companions adduced it as evidence that day as among the signs of its inauthenticity. In his *Talqīḥ al-fuhūm bi tanqīḥ ṣiyagh al-ʿulūm*, al-Ṣalāḥ

al-ʿAlāʾī [d. 761/1359] states explicitly that it is not authentically related that Abū Bakr ﷺ cited it as proof, even though some theologians state that he did.... Moreover, Ibn Ḥajar's ascribing the statement to Abū Bakr ﷺ and Abū Hurayrah ﷺ in the Musnad of Imam Aḥmad is a pure error, akin to al-Nawawī's ascribing it to the two *ṣaḥīḥ* collections [al-Bukhārī and Muslim], since the statement is not found in any of those collections.... As for Ibn Ḥajar's short treatise entitled *Ladhdhat al-ʿaysh fī ṭuruq ḥadīth al-aʾimmah min Quraysh*, and his claim therein of its incontestable multiple-chain transmission (*tawātur*), that ruling pertains only to the general virtue of Quraysh, not to this hadith in particular. (Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq bi ibṭāl al-bāṭil fī Mughīth al-khalq* [Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li al-Turāth, 1998], 36–37. [BT])

49 He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-ʿAbbās b. ʿUthmān b. Shāfiʿ al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī al-Muṭṭalibī, one of the four imams of Sunni orthodoxy and eponym of the Shafi'i legal school. He was a brilliant jurist and authored many works in law and hadith. He died in the year 204/820. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 6:26.

50 Violent rebellion was historically forbidden in classical Sunnism, even if the ruler was tyrannical, due to the civil discord and strife (*fitnah*) that would likely ensue. The one possible case for a Muslim to reject his allegiance to the ruler (although still contingent on various legal stipulations) was if the Muslim ruler had publicly left Islam and ordered the Muslim populace to leave Islam. See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 479; al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 427.

However, the prohibition of violent revolt did not preclude the legitimacy of peaceful protest and the use of diplomacy against tyranny and corruption. Nonviolent political measures to redress wrongs and secure rights are forms of "enjoining good and forbidding evil" and reflect genuine concern and advice (*naṣīḥah*), functions that Muslims are ordered to perform, particularly in relation to those in authority. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The entire

religion is genuine concern and sincerity (*al-dīn al-naṣīḥah*)," and when asked, "To whom?," he replied, "To God, to His Book, to His Messenger ﷺ, *to the leaders of the Muslims* and the general public" (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim). Yet the primacy of *naṣīḥah* to God, the Qur'an, and the Prophet ﷺ, in this context, before *naṣīḥah* to leaders and fellow citizens, signifies that the foundation and basis of political reform are metaphysical. In the Islamic ethos, the moral imperative of bettering one's society is grounded in the ontological imperative of recognizing God's oneness. This "grounding of the moral imperative" ensures that people's efforts do not exceed the limits of the sacred law and that their internal states, despite the injustice they experience, are states of contentment with the divine decree (*riḍā bi al-qadar*) and of consigning the matter to God, the exalted (*tafwīḍ al-amr ilā Allāh*).

Finally, in general, the permissibility of "enjoining good and forbidding evil" is dependent on several legal conditions, including that there not be a likelihood of the situation worsening or of greater sin occurring, for, otherwise, it would be reprehensible or even unlawful. For a concise discussion, see al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 483–84.

51 This tradition is related, with slight variations in wording, by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Ḥākim, al-Ṭabarānī, Abū Nuʿaym, and others. Imam al-Sakhāwī comments, "On the whole, it is a hadith whose text is well-known (*mashhūr*), possessing numerous chains of narration (*asānīd*) and corroborating versions (*shawāhid*), ascribed to both the Prophet ﷺ and to others [that is, the Prophet's companions, such as Ibn Masʿūd ؓ]" (*Al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasanah*, 460). Some versions add: "And God's providential hand is with the majority (*al-jamāʿah*)" and "So follow the mainstream (*al-sawād al-aʿẓam*)" and "So whoever diverges, does so towards the Inferno" (*Al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasanah*, 460). Shaykh Shuʿayb al-Arna'ūṭ, the editor of Sunan Ibn Mājah, says it is rigorously authenticated in light of all corroborating versions. See Ibn Mājah, *Al-Sunan*, 5:96.

It is a foundational text for Sunni Islam, and one of the bases of its principle of scholarly consensus, since in scholastic matters such as theology and law, the community is represented by its scholars. It is also a basis of what could be termed *orthodoxy* (see Introduction for more detail), as well as of the label of *heterodoxy* for aberrant positions.

52 Imam al-Taftāzānī states, "So ʿAlī ؓ gave his allegiance to [Abū Bakr ؓ] publicly, after a short period of delay. And, had the caliphate not been a right of [Abū Bakr's], the Prophet's companions would not have agreed on it, / and ʿAlī ؓ would have disputed with him as he later disputed with Muʿāwiyah ؓ, and he would have brought forth as evidence a hadith of his own right to the caliphate, had such a text existed, as the Shia opine. / Indeed, how could it be imagined that the Prophet's companions would agree to a falsehood and would desist from applying a hadith?" (al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, 349–50).

Regarding the phrase "as he later disputed with Muʿāwiyah ؓ"(351), Imam al-Taftāzānī clarifies (as do Sunni theologians in general) that the disputes between the companions were not over the caliphate itself; rather, they were due to differences in scholarly judgment (*ijtihād*) and not based on ego and resentment. Each companion made an earnest attempt to do what is right, though some were correct and others were incorrect, and conflicts erupted. But scripture had confirmed the moral integrity of all companions, without exception. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, 349–50.

And regarding al-Taftāzānī's statement "after a short period of delay," Imam al-Farhārī comments,

> The narrations on this matter differ, resulting in different opinions: (1) ʿAlī ؓ gave allegiance at the onset; it is related on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī ؓ [d. 74/693], who said regarding the incident of the Saqīfah, "Abū Bakr ؓ ascended the pulpit and, looking at the faces of the congregation, did not see ʿAlī ؓ. So he called for him and, when he came, said, 'O cousin of God's

Messenger ﷺ, do you desire to split the Muslims?' [ʿAlī] replied, 'No blame [upon you], O caliph of God's Messenger ﷺ.' So he gave his allegiance." This is narrated by al-Ḥākim, al-Bayhaqī, and Ibn Ḥibbān [d. 354/965], the latter deeming it rigorously authenticated. So he was delayed for some time only due to being preoccupied with the task of washing the Prophet's body. (2) ʿAlī gave allegiance after six months, after the death of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' ﷺ. This is narrated in the *ṣaḥīḥ* collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. (3) The correct view, which reconciles both of these narrations, is that ʿAlī ﷺ gave allegiance at the onset, but then delayed in *keeping company* with Abū Bakr ﷺ, such that he renewed his allegiance after six months. Scholars then differ on the reason of this delay: (a) ʿAlī ﷺ was busy serving Fāṭimah ﷺ, for she remained ill after the Prophet's death out of grief over him. (b) ʿAlī ﷺ was not pleased with being excluded from the council [that gathered initially and decided on Abū Bakr ﷺ], for it is related that ʿAlī ﷺ said at the time of allegiance, "O Abū Bakr ﷺ, verily we consider you most deserving of the caliphate, and we recognize your merit, but we were excluded from the counsel." He replied, "By God, I did not desire [the caliphate] but feared discord [for the community]." This is narrated by al-Dāraquṭnī [d. 385/995]. (c) ʿAlī ﷺ was preoccupied with gathering the Qur'an. Ibn [Abī] Dāwūd [d. 316/929] relates that Abū Bakr ﷺ said, "Are you upset that I am the caliph?" He replied, "No. Rather, I made an oath that, aside from attending the daily ritual prayer, I would not don my cloak until I gathered the Qur'an." (d) He refrained from any action at all, out of grief over [the passing of] God's Messenger ﷺ, while knowing with full conviction that the affair [of rulership] would be sufficiently handled by the emigrants and helpers. In my opinion, these four reasons are not mutually exclusive and thus together serve as the reason for his delay. So comprehend this and beware of satanic insinuations [that lead one to have a bad opinion of any prophetic companion].

Imam al-Farhārī continues,

> The Shia claim the Prophet ﷺ explicitly appointed ʿAlī ؓ as caliph after him, but that cannot be true. If that were the case, ʿAlī ؓ could not have remained silent and abstained from clarifying the Prophet's mandate, given the unlawfulness of silence when clarification of a legal ruling is binding. It is then claimed that he feared from their evil [Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and others ؓ], and that all narrations of ʿAlī's following the first three caliphs and his affirming their merit are to be understood as taqiyah. But this interpretation is preposterous because it ascribes disgrace to God's domineering lion. Indeed, if taqiyah were affirmed [for ʿAlī and his blessed progeny ؓ], then none of their statements or actions could be relied upon [as precedent for piety and virtue]. And, the alleged statements of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq [d. 148/765] "Taqiyah is my religion and the religion of my forefathers" and "Anyone who refrains from taqiyah is not one of us" are fabrications; even if they were sound narrations, [the term *taqiyah* in these statements] would refer to fear of God, the exalted. How could dissimulation due to fear of people's harm be valid in light of God's statement in the Qur'an, "So fear not men, but fear Me alone" (5:44)? (*Al-Nibrās*, 304–5)

53 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

> This includes dealing with the death of God's Messenger ﷺ, since the people went into shock, to the extent that ʿUmar ؓ said, "Whoever says that Muḥammad ﷺ has died, I shall strike his neck!" So Abū Bakr ؓ addressed the people and said in his sermon, "Verily, whosoever used to worship Muḥammad ﷺ, know that Muḥammad ﷺ has died; but whoever used to worship God, indeed He is living and never dies." So they realized that he had in fact died.
>
> Another example is their differing on the issue of his burial: the emigrants suggested he should be transferred to Mecca, the helpers suggested he should be buried in Medina, and some suggested he should be moved to Jerusalem. So Abū Bakr ؓ related from

the Prophet ﷺ that all prophets are to be buried in the exact place where they pass away, and they agreed on that ruling.

Likewise is their differing on the day of the Saqīfah regarding rulership of the community: [some of] the helpers said [there should be two rulers, and] one should be chosen from the emigrants and another should be chosen from the helpers, while some inclined toward al-ʿAbbās ؓ [d. 32/653] and others toward ʿAlī, ؓ to the extent that great strife almost erupted among them; so the matter was settled by what Abū Bakr put forth.

Another example is their difference on sending out the army of Usāmah [b. Zayd] ؓ [d. 54/674] after God's Messenger ﷺ left a directive to do so: most of the companions suggested that it was preferable [in light of the circumstances after the Prophet's passing away, for the safety of Medina] to not dispatch the army, but Abū Bakr ؓ insisted, "I shall not undo a knot that God's Messenger ﷺ himself tied, and I shall not deviate from his order, even if Medina were to become an abode of wild lions." So he carried out the directive, and that was the correct decision.

Another example is their differing on whether or not to fight the treasonous apostates, who refused to pay the alms (zakat) [the wars of apostasy]. All of the Prophet's companions agreed they should make an exemption for the alms that year and come to a compromise regarding what those [treasonous] tribes sought, yet Abū Bakr was firmly resolved on fighting them, saying, "By God, were they to withhold a single hobbling cord [to tether animals] from what they used to pay God's Messenger ﷺ, I would fight them with the sword." It was said to him, "With whom would you fight them, since most of the companions disagree with you?" He replied, "With these two daughters of mine," and pointed to ʿĀ'ishah and Asmā' [d. 73/692]. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 49r-v and edition A, 82r. [BT])

54 He is ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ b. Umayyah al-Qurashī ؓ, leader of the faithful; "possessor of two lights" (*dhū al-nūrayn*), because he was the husband of two daughters of God's Messenger ﷺ

(Ruqayyah and, after her death, Umm Kulthūm ﵄); and third rightly guided caliph of Islam. He was martyred while reciting the Qur'an in his home in Medina, on the morning of Eid al-Aḍḥā in the year 35/656. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:462.

That is, even if the allegiance entails difficulty due to ʿUmar's excellence in steadfastness for the religion and his refusal to compromise its principles. See ʿIṣām (d. 945/1538), cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 350.

al-Haytamī, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqah*, 133–36.

He is Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf b. ʿAbd ʿAwf b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith al-Zuhrī al-Qurashī, the Prophet's eminent companion, one of the first people to accept Islam, and one of the ten promised paradise. He died in the year 32/652. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:416.

He is Abū Muḥammad Ṭalḥah b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUthmān al-Taymī al-Qurashī. He was the Prophet's companion of immense courage and generosity, called a "living martyr" for his valor at the Battle of Uḥud defending the Prophet ﷺ, and one of the ten promised paradise. He was martyred at the Battle of the Camel in the year 36/656. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:229.

He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām b. Khuwaylid al-Asadī al-Qurashī, the Prophet's eminent companion and one of the ten promised paradise. He was treacherously martyred at the Battle of the Camel in the year 36/656. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 1:545.

He is Abū Isḥāq Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ Mālik b. Uhayb b. ʿAbd Manāf al-Qurashī al-Zuhrī, the Prophet's eminent companion and one of the ten promised paradise. He died in the year 55/675. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 2:33.

al-Haytamī, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqah*, 160–64.

al-Haytamī, *Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqah*, 182–83.

63 Imam al-Farhārī explains:

> The mistake in legal judgment (*ijtihād*) [on the part of some companions, such as Muʿāwiyah, ʿĀ'ishah, and others ﵃] was hastiness in avenging the murder of ʿUthmān ﵁, since they thought a delay in this would result in even more boldness of the general laity against the luminaries [among the Prophet's companions], and that many important goals would be foregone. According to what is established by the scholars of hadith, the details of this incident are that a group of the Prophet's companions asked ʿAlī ﵁ to take retribution against ʿUthmān's murderers, who after the assassination were among those who had given allegiance to ʿAlī ﵁ and followed him. And the one who was most avid in seeking retribution was ʿĀ'ishah ﵂. But ʿAlī ﵁ waited until the matter of the caliphate was fully consolidated, since the rebels were a great multitude, [being] around four thousand, although some even said they were around twenty thousand. Both narrations can be reconciled though, for they continued to grow in number, little by little [from the original four thousand to about twenty thousand]. So ʿĀ'ishah ﵂ was outraged and set forth for Basra, saying, "I shall not reside in Medina until the rebels are killed," and a group of the Prophet's companions joined her, out of honor for her rank. And ʿAlī ﵁ set forth behind her, seeking her return, but she refused [to return] and continued until she reached Basra. So conflict and confusion broke out between the two groups, until [in the confusion,] battle erupted. Ṭalḥah and Zubayr ﵄ were killed; ʿĀ'ishah's camel was hamstrung; and several people around her were killed, since in their zeal to safeguard the wife of God's Messenger ﷺ, they would not leave the camel unattended. For this reason, it was termed the Battle of the Camel. ʿAlī ﵁ was victorious, and he commanded Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr ﵁ to escort [his sister] ʿĀ'ishah ﵂ back to Medina. Then Muʿāwiyah ﵁, who was a relative of ʿUthmān ﵁ [and thus had the greatest right to retribution from his murderers], gathered an army, and a battle took place at Ṣiffīn, a place on the coast of the Euphrates River,

which was termed the Battle of Ṣiffīn. The fighting lasted several days, until finally there was arbitration and a truce. (*Al-Nibrās*, 307)

Imam al-Farhārī later comments:

The position of Sunni orthodoxy is that ʿAlī ﷺ was correct and that those [companions] who fought him were mistaken in their legal judgment and thus excused; both groups [of companions] were morally upright and pious. It is impermissible to criticize or defame any companion, due to the well-known hadith narrations that praise the companions and forbid disparagement of them. This is the truth on the matter, and anything else is wrong and misguided. (*Al-Nibrās*, 307)

The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

It is authentically narrated that ʿĀ'ishah felt remorse for going out at the Battle of the Camel—she would weep over it until her face veil would become damp. Likewise, it is related that when Ṭalḥah was about to die, he extended his hand to a young man from ʿAlī's army and said, "Give me your hand so I may give allegiance to the leader of the believers (*amīr al-mu'minīn*) [meaning ʿAlī ﷺ]." He did that only so his death would be upon allegiance to the rightful just ruler. Some of our fellow Māturīdīs claim there is consensus of the Prophet's companions on ʿAlī's caliphate, since they agree that the caliphate is restricted to two men—ʿAlī and ʿUthmān—so if ʿUthmān is not an option due to his martyrdom, then the consensus is affirmed for the caliphate of ʿAlī ﷺ. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 52v. [BT])

A rigorously authenticated narration, due to corroborating versions, related by Ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, and al-Nasā'ī. See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal*, 5:220, 36:248; Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ashʿath al-Azdī al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-sunan*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāmah, 6 vols., 2nd ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Rayyān, 2004), 5:202–3; al-Talīdī, *Tahdhīb al-khaṣā'iṣ*, 293.

66 She is Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' ﷺ, the daughter of God's beloved messenger, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib ﷺ, al-Hāshimiyyah al-Qurashiyyah, and her mother is Khadījah bt. Khuwaylid ﷺ. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ﷺ married her, and their children were al-Ḥasan (d. 49/669), al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680), Umm Kulthūm (d. 9/630), and Zaynab (d. 62/682) ﷺ. She died in the year 11/632. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah*, 4:377.

67 Sunan al-Tirmidhī. See al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī, *ʿĀriḍat al-aḥwadhī*, 13:244.

68 The moral integrity (*ʿadālah*) of all the Prophet's companions, without exception, is established by God's testimony in explicit texts of the Qur'an and by the Prophet's testimony in authentic hadith. God, the exalted, states, "You are the best community brought forth for mankind" (3:110); "God is well-pleased with them, and they are pleased with God" (98:8); "God was certainly well pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you [O Muḥammad] beneath the tree, so He knew what was in their hearts" (48:18); and "The indigent emigrants, who were driven out of their homes and from their property, while they sought only the bounty of God and His supreme pleasure and helped God and His Messenger, are the genuine and truthful. And so too are those who, from beforehand, prepared the abode and were sincere in faith, genuinely loving those who migrated to them, finding in their own souls no need [or envy] regarding what the others were given, and preferring others over themselves even if they too were in need. Those who are safeguarded from the stinginess of their souls are the truly prosperous" (59:8–9).

The Prophet ﷺ said (in the full version of the hadith cited above in the text), "[Fear] God, [fear] God, [and beware of Him] regarding my companions! [Fear] God, [fear] God, [and beware of Him] regarding my companions! Do not take them as targets [of your blame] after my death. Whoever loves them, it is because

of his love for me that he loves them; whoever hates them, it is because of his hate for me that he hates them. Whoever offends them has offended me, and whoever offends me has offended God, and whoever offends God might very well be taken by Him [in punishment]" (Sunan al-Tirmidhī). He also said, "Do not insult my companions. Do not insult my companions. For by Him in whose dominion is my soul, were one of you to donate as much gold as Mount Uḥud, it would not amount to even a small measure, or even half of that, spent by one of them" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim). He also said, "Do not denigrate my companions, for whoever denigrates my companions shall have the curse of God, the angels, and all of humanity: God will not accept his good deeds, whether obligatory or optional" (al-Ḥākim, *Al-Mustadrak*). See al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī, *ʿĀriḍāt al-aḥwadhī*, 13:244; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 7:21; Usmani, *Takmilat fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 5:158; al-Ḥākim Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nīsāpūrī, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, 5 vols. (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadīthiyyah li al-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr, n.d.), 3:362.

Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ testified to the greatness of them all in his statement "The best of people is my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim). In light of this reality, the Sunni position is to hold all of the Prophet's companions in the highest esteem, with veneration, love, and appreciation for their status and sacrifice; none of the companions is removed from this esteem due to the conflicts that erupted among them, since each of them had a righteous intention and engaged in independent legal judgment (*ijtihād*), so as to earnestly apply what he or she understood as the appropriate legal ruling for those dire situations. See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd* 336; 354–55.

Moreover, as Imam al-Ṣāwī notes, "Investigating what transpired between them is neither a point of creed nor beneficial for one's religious practice; in fact, it is likely harmful for one's religious certitude. So delving into it is impermissible, unless

done for educational purposes or to rebut blind fanatics. As for laypeople, exploring those incidents is not allowed, due to their profound dearth of religious knowledge and their ignorance of sound interpretation" (*Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 330).

Lastly, from a spiritual perspective, speaking ill of any saint—let alone a companion of the Prophet ﷺ—is a sign of being forsaken by the divine, as Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (d. 245/859) said, "When the heart gets accustomed to turning away from God, criticizing God's saints becomes its companion" (al-ʿArūsī, *Natā'ij al-afkār al-qudsiyyah*, 3:218). Shaykh al-Islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520) comments, "That is, by having a bad opinion of them and interpreting their actions in a manner of blame and condemnation. This is because no one venerates [God's saints], except one who venerates in his heart the majesty and greatness of God, which occurs only when one is consistent in being vigilant for God and perceives the perfection of the divine essence and attributes. But he who turns away from God will lose veneration of God, and by loss of veneration of God, one loses veneration of those whom God venerates, resulting in criticism and blame of their acts" (218).

Divine Omnipotence, Human Agency, and Ontology of the World

ON ASCRIPTION OF JUSTICE OR INJUSTICE

Taʿdīl is to ascribe justice [to an entity], while *tajwīr* is to ascribe [to it] injustice. The People of the Qiblah [Muslims] have differed with regard to these issues [namely, the next few sections of the text] related to the possibility of ascription or attribution [of certain actions] to God, the exalted, [the difference of opinion being] based on whether those actions entail justice (*ʿadl*) versus injustice (*jawr*), or wisdom (*ḥikmah*) versus foolishness (*safah*), while they are in unanimous agreement that God, the exalted, is in fact all-just and all-wise, transcendent above any injustice or foolishness whatsoever.

They then differed with respect to the formal definitions of wisdom and foolishness. The Muʿtazilites state that wisdom is that which entails a benefit for the doer or for another, while foolishness is its opposite. The Ashʿarī scholars state that wisdom is that which occurs according to the intention of the doer, while foolishness is its opposite. The shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and those who follow him—may God have mercy on them—state that wisdom is that which has a praiseworthy end, while foolishness is its opposite.[1] We will shortly explain the relevant details of these issues, if God wills.[2]

القَوْلُ فِي مَسَائِلِ التَّعْدِيلِ وَالتَّجْوِيرِ

التَّعْدِيلُ هُوَ النِّسْبَةُ إِلَى الْعَدْلِ ، وَالتَّجْوِيرُ هُوَ النِّسْبَةُ إِلَى الْجَوْرِ . وَقَدِ اخْتَلَفَ أَهْلُ الْقِبْلَةِ فِي هَذِهِ الْمَسَائِلِ ، فِي جَوَازِ النِّسْبَةِ وَالْإِضَافَةِ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى بِنَاءً عَلَى أَنَّهُ عَدْلٌ أَوْ جَوْرٌ ، حِكْمَةٌ أَوْ سَفَهٌ ، مَعَ اتِّفَاقِهِمْ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى مَوْصُوفٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ مُنَزَّهٌ عَنِ الْجَوْرِ وَالسَّفَهِ .

ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي حَدِّ الْحِكْمَةِ وَالسَّفَهِ . قَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْحِكْمَةُ مَا فِيهِ مَنْفَعَةٌ لِلْفَاعِلِ أَوْ لِغَيْرِهِ ، وَالسَّفَهُ عَلَى ضِدِّهِ . وَقَالَتِ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةُ الْحِكْمَةُ مَا وَقَعَ عَلَى قَصْدِ فَاعِلِهِ ، وَالسَّفَهُ عَلَى ضِدِّهِ . وَقَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ الْمَاتُرِيدِيُّ وَمَنْ تَابَعَهُ رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ الْحِكْمَةُ مَا لَهُ عَاقِبَةٌ حَمِيدَةٌ ، وَالسَّفَهُ عَلَى ضِدِّهِ . وَسَنُبَيِّنُ تَفْصِيلَ هَذِهِ الْمَسَائِلِ بَعْدَ هَذَا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ تَعَالَى .

ON POTENCY AND HUMAN AGENCY

Potency (*istiṭāʿah*), *ability* (*qudrah*), *strength* (*quwwah*), *power* (*ṭāqah*), and *capacity* (*wusʿ*) are words with similar meanings according to linguists, but they are fully synonymous according to discursive theologians.[3] According to Sunni orthodoxy, as opposed to the [hard] Jabarites (determinists), servants [of God—that is, human beings] possess ability in their volitional actions [but not in their involuntary acts]. [Jabarites] state that the servant, *like an inanimate object*, is no more than a vessel for God's creative act. Yet this opinion renders useless the divine command, prohibition, promise, and threat; entails annulment of Islam's legal rulings; and contradicts what a person perceives and necessarily knows of himself [that he has real choice and power to act]. It is effectively the position of the sophists [who denied the reality of the world or our ability to know its reality]. The Qadarites, Ḍirāriyyah, and many of the Karrāmiyyah admit that the servant has potency, yet they claim it exists before the corresponding action, [and they claim the latter] so that legal responsibility (*taklīf*) applies to people who have actual ability to act.

Sunni orthodoxy maintains that potency to perform an act coexists with that act [and does not exist prior to the act], since temporal ability is an accident, and it is impossible for an accident to last [for more than a moment]. Hence, if ability preceded the act, it would cease to exist at the time of the act, whereby the act would occur without ability; if an act could occur without ability, then an act could be performed by someone incapable and powerless, which is incorrect.

The proof that the continuity of accidents [for longer than a moment] is impossible is that continuity (*baqā'*) is a quality that is other than the actual entity that continues, as indicated by the fact that a particle in its very initial stage of existence is described as *existing* but not *continuing*.

القَوْلُ فِي الْإِسْتِطَاعَةِ

الاِسْتِطَاعَةُ وَالْقُدْرَةُ وَالْقُوَّةُ وَالطَّاقَةُ وَالْوُسْعُ أَسْمَاءٌ مُتَقَارِبَةٌ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ اللُّغَةِ مُتَرَادِفَةٌ عِنْدَ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ ، وَهِيَ ثَابِتَةٌ لِلْعِبَادِ فِي الْأَفْعَالِ الْإِخْتِيَارِيَّةِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ ، خِلَافًا لِلْجَبْرِيَّةِ ، فَإِنَّهُمْ قَالُوا الْعَبْدُ مَجْرَى خَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، كَالْجَمَادَاتِ . وَفِي هَذَا الْقَوْلِ إِبْطَالٌ لِلْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ وَالْوَعْدِ وَالْوَعِيدِ وَرَفْعُ الشَّرَائِعِ وَإِنْكَارُ الْحِسِّ وَالضَّرُورَةِ وَالْتِحَاقٌ بِالسُّوفَسْطَائِيَّةِ . وَقَالَتِ الْقَدَرِيَّةُ وَالضِّرَارِيَّةُ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ الْكَرَّامِيَّةِ الْإِسْتِطَاعَةُ ثَابِتَةٌ لِلْعَبْدِ وَلَكِنْ قَبْلَ الْفِعْلِ ، لِيَكُونَ التَّكْلِيفُ لِلْقَادِرِ .

وَقَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ اسْتِطَاعَةُ الْفِعْلِ مُقَارِنَةٌ لِلْفِعْلِ ، لِأَنَّ الْقُدْرَةَ الْحَادِثَةَ عَرَضٌ وَالْعَرَضُ يَسْتَحِيلُ بَقَاؤُهُ ، فَلَوْ كَانَتِ الْقُدْرَةُ سَابِقَةً عَلَى الْفِعْلِ لَانْعَدَمَتْ وَقْتَ الْفِعْلِ فَحَصَلَ الْفِعْلُ بِدُونِ الْقُدْرَةِ ، وَلَوْ صَحَّ الْفِعْلُ بِدُونِ الْقُدْرَةِ لَصَحَّ مِنَ الْعَاجِزِ وَإِنَّهُ فَاسِدٌ .

وَدَلَالَةُ اسْتِحَالَةِ بَقَاءِ الْأَعْرَاضِ أَنَّ الْبَقَاءَ مَعْنًى وَرَاءَ ذَاتِ الْبَاقِي ، بِدَلِيلِ أَنَّ الْجَوْهَرَ فِي أَوَّلِ أَحْوَالِ وُجُودِهِ يُوصَفُ بِالْوُجُودِ وَلَا يُوصَفُ بِالْبَقَاءِ .

This is further elucidated by considering that if a particle existed and then ceased to exist, it would be correct to say, "It existed, yet did not continue"; but if continuity were the same as existence, then that statement would effectively mean "It existed, yet did not exist," which is absurd.

Once it is established that *continuity* is a quality other than *existence*, then we can state that accidents cannot subsist by themselves, since it is impossible to conceive of movement without that which is moving. So if [accidents] could continue, then it would be necessary for *continuity* to subsist in them, yet if it is impossible for an accident to subsist by itself, it is impossible for continuity [or any accident] to subsist in an accident. Moreover, were it possible for an accident to subsist within an accident, then life could subsist within ability, and movement within color; yet it is of course illogical for ability to be described as living, or color as moving. The same, then, applies to continuity. Also, if an accident could continue, its continuity would differ from the continuity of its particle, since the two differ in reality, and it is impossible for two different things to continue with one *continuity*. If that were valid, it would be possible for ability to continue despite the extinction of the one who was able; if that were possible, ability could exist at the onset without the one who is able. All of this is absurd, so that which leads to it is also absurd.

يُوَضِّحُهُ أَنَّ الْجَوْهَرَ إِذَا وُجِدَ فَانْعَدَمَ صَحَّ أَن يُقَالَ وُجِدَ وَلَمْ يَبْقَ ، وَلَوْ كَانَ الْبَقَاءُ هُوَ الْوُجُودَ لَصَارَ تَقْدِيرُ الْكَلَامِ كَأَنَّهُ قَالَ وُجِدَ وَلَمْ يُوجَدْ ، وَإِنَّهُ فَاسِدٌ .

وَإِذَا ثَبَتَ أَنَّ الْبَقَاءَ مَعْنًى وَرَاءَ الْوُجُودِ فَنَقُولُ الْأَعْرَاضُ لَا قِيَامَ لَهَا بِذَوَاتِهَا ، إِذْ تَقْدِيرُ الْحَرَكَةِ بِدُونِ الْمُتَحَرِّكِ مُحَالٌ ، فَلَوْ كَانَتْ بَاقِيَةً لَوَجَبَ قِيَامُ الْبَقَاءِ بِهَا ، وَمَتَى اسْتَحَالَ قِيَامُ الْعَرَضِ بِذَاتِهِ اسْتَحَالَ قِيَامُ الْبَقَاءِ بِهِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّهُ لَوْ جَازَ قِيَامُ الْعَرَضِ بِالْعَرَضِ لَجَازَ قِيَامُ الْحَيَاةِ بِالْقُدْرَةِ وَالْحَرَكَةِ بِاللَّوْنِ ، وَيَسْتَحِيلُ أَنْ تُوصَفَ الْحَيَاةُ بِالْقُدْرَةِ وَالْحَرَكَةُ بِاللَّوْنِ ، فَكَذَا الْبَقَاءُ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْعَرَضَ لَوْ كَانَ بَاقِيًا لَكَانَ بَقَاؤُهُ غَيْرَ بَقَاءِ الْجَوْهَرِ، لِأَنَّهُمَا مُتَغَايِرَانِ حَقِيقَةً ، وَيَسْتَحِيلُ بَقَاءُ شَيْئَيْنِ مُتَغَايِرَيْنِ بِبَقَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ ، وَلَوْ صَحَّ ذَلِكَ لَأَمْكَنَ تَقْدِيرُ بَقَاءِ الْقُدْرَةِ مَعَ فَنَاءِ الْقَادِرِ ، وَلَوْ جَازَ ذَلِكَ لَجَازَ وُجُودُ الْقُدْرَةِ ابْتِدَاءً مَعَ عَدَمِ الْقَادِرِ ، وَهَذَا كُلُّهُ مُحَالٌ ، فَمَا يُؤَدِّي إِلَيْهِ يَكُونُ مُحَالًا أَيْضًا .

If it is said: If we concede the impossibility of the *literal* continuity of ability, it does not preclude an action being divested of ability. Do you not maintain that attributes *effectively* remain, by renewal of their likenesses, such as the lawfulness of things, or their being owned property, or such as the disbelief or faith of a human being? Ability too, then, would continue until the time of an action, by the renewal of its likeness.[4] We respond: Once you concede the impossibility of the literal continuity of ability, adherence to [the position of] "renewal of likenesses" proves of no benefit for you. This is because the ability that exists at the time of the act is either the ability of that concurrent act or of another act immediately following it. If you state it is of that concurrent act, you have conceded to the occurrence of that act by a concurrent ability, whereby the ability of the prior moment is rendered null with respect to the existence of this act, so its existence is akin to its nonexistence. If you state that it is of another act immediately following it, then this [first] act has become divested of any ability; even if it was done by someone able to do another act, this [first] act was thus done by someone [who was at that moment] without ability. If that were possible, then action simultaneously conjoined with incapacity would be possible. And the opponent stipulates prior ability only so that legal responsibility is valid, but if an act can occur without ability, then what need is there to stipulate it at the time of responsibility? Moreover, we are in agreement that an act cannot conceivably occur by an ability of the far past if that ability is nonexistent at the time of the act, so likewise an act cannot exist by an ability of one moment prior [if it is also nonexistent at the time of the act], since nonexistence [of the ability to act] in the present moment [of the action] is one and the same [in both scenarios].

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ سَلَّمْنَا اسْتِحَالَةَ بَقَاءِ الْقُدْرَةِ حَقِيقَةً لَمْ يَلْزَم مِنْ ذَلِكَ خُلُوُّ الْفِعْلِ عَنِ الْقُدْرَةِ، أَلَيْسَ أَنَّكُمْ قُلْتُمْ بِبَقَاءِ الصِّفَاتِ حُكْمًا بِتَجَدُّدِ أَمْثَالِهَا، كَالْحِلِّ وَالْمِلْكِ فِي الْأَعْيَانِ، وَبَقَاءِ الْكُفْرِ وَالْإِيمَانِ فِي ذَاتِ الْإِنْسَانِ، فَتَكُونُ الْقُدْرَةُ بَاقِيَةً إِلَى وَقْتِ الْفِعْلِ بِتَجَدُّدِ أَمْثَالِهَا. قُلْنَا مَتَى سَلَّمْتُمُ اسْتِحَالَةَ بَقَاءِ الْقُدْرَةِ حَقِيقَةً لَمْ يَنْفَعْكُمُ التَّشَبُّثُ بِتَجَدُّدِ الْأَمْثَالِ، لِأَنَّ الْقُدْرَةَ الَّتِي حَدَثَتْ مُقَارِنَةً لِلْفِعْلِ لَا تَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ قُدْرَةَ هَذَا الْفِعْلِ الْمُقَارَنِ أَوْ قُدْرَةَ فِعْلٍ آخَرَ يَتَعَقَّبُهَا. إِنْ قُلْتُمْ قُدْرَةُ هَذَا الْفِعْلِ الْمُقَارَنِ لَزِمَكُمْ حُصُولُ الْفِعْلِ بِالْقُدْرَةِ الْمُقَارِنَةِ، وَتَصِيرُ الْقُدْرَةُ السَّابِقَةُ ضَائِعَةً فِيمَا يَرْجِعُ إِلَى وُجُودِ هَذَا الْفِعْلِ، فَيَكُونُ وُجُودُهَا كَعَدَمِهَا. وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ قُدْرَةُ فِعْلٍ آخَرَ يَتَعَقَّبُهَا فَقَدْ خَلَا هَذَا الْفِعْلُ عَنْ قُدْرَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ قَادِرًا عَلَى فِعْلٍ آخَرَ، فَيَكُونُ الْفِعْلُ مِمَّن لَا قُدْرَةَ لَهُ، وَلَوْ جَازَ ذَلِكَ لَجَازَ اتِّحَادُ الْفِعْلِ مَعَ الْعَجْزِ. وَالْخَصْمُ إِنَّمَا يَشْتَرِطُ سَبْقَ الْقُدْرَةِ لِيَصِحَّ التَّكْلِيفُ، فَإِذَا صَحَّ الْفِعْلُ بِدُونِ الْقُدْرَةِ فَأَيَّةُ حَاجَةٍ إِلَى اشْتِرَاطِهَا وَقْتَ التَّكْلِيفِ؟ وَلِأَنَّا تَوَافَقْنَا عَلَى أَنَّ الْفِعْلَ يَسْتَحِيلُ بِقُدْرَةٍ سَابِقَةٍ عَلَيْهِ بِأَزْمَانٍ كَثِيرَةٍ مَتَى كَانَتْ مَعْدُومَةً وَقْتَ الْفِعْلِ، فَكَذَا يَسْتَحِيلُ وُجُودُهُ بِقُدْرَةٍ سَابِقَةٍ عَلَيْهِ بِزَمَانٍ وَاحِدٍ، لِأَنَّ الْعَدَمَ فِي الْحَالِ لَا يَتَفَاوَتُ.

To follow, is one ability suitable for two opposites, or not? Most of the Ashʿarī scholars as well as the theologians of the People of Hadith state that it is not. Abū Ḥanīfah ﵁ stated that it is suitable, yet by way of substitution; [Imam] al-Qalānisī,[5] Ibn Surayj[6] [d. 306/918], and Ibn al-Rāwandī followed him on this issue. Their reasoning is that the locus of ability [that is, a person's entity or body] is a tool suitable for two opposites, so the same applies to ability. To further elucidate, [know that] obedience and disobedience differ only with respect to the divine command and prohibition, not with respect to the act itself. Prostration, for example, is obedience when performed for God yet disobedience when performed for an idol; there is no difference, however, in the actual act of prostration, and thus neither in the ability to do so. Rather, if [the ability] is conjoined with an act of obedience, it is termed *enablement* [to do good] (*tawfīq*), and if with an act of disobedience, then *being forsaken* [by the divine] (*khidhlān*); yet [the ability] in and of itself is one. Similarly, prostration is termed *obedience* when done for God and *disobedience* when done for an idol; yet in and of itself, it is [in either case] one and the same—namely, placing the forehead on the ground. Its name differs only with respect to its ascription; so likewise with this [ability]. And enablement is by God alone.

ثُمَّ الْقُدْرَةُ الْوَاحِدَةُ هَلْ تَصْلُحُ لِلضِّدَّيْنِ أَمْ لَا ؟ قَالَ عَامَّةُ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةِ وَمُتَكَلِّمُو أَهْلِ الْحَدِيثِ إِنَّهَا لَا تَصْلُحُ . وَقَالَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهَا تَصْلُحُ وَلَكِنْ عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْبَدَلِ ، وَتَابَعَهُ فِي ذَلِكَ الْقَلَانِسِيُّ وَابْنُ سُرَيْجٍ وَابْنُ الرَّاوَنْدِيِّ ، لِأَنَّ مَحَلَّ الْقُدْرَةِ هُوَ الْآلَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ لِلضِّدَّيْنِ ، فَكَذَا الْقُدْرَةُ . وَتَحْقِيقُهُ أَنَّ الطَّاعَةَ مَعَ الْمَعْصِيَةِ إِنَّمَا يَخْتَلِفَانِ بِالنِّسْبَةِ إِلَى الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ لَا مِنْ حَيْثُ ذَاتُ الْفِعْلِ . فَإِنَّ السَّجْدَةَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى طَاعَةٌ وَلِلصَّنَمِ مَعْصِيَةٌ ، وَلَا تَفَاوُتَ فِي ذَاتِ السَّجْدَةِ فَلَا تَتَفَاوَتُ الْقُدْرَةُ عَلَيْهَا ، إِلَّا أَنَّهَا إِذَا اقْتَرَنَتْ بِالطَّاعَةِ سُمِّيَتْ تَوْفِيقًا ، وَإِذَا اقْتَرَنَتْ بِالْمَعْصِيَةِ سُمِّيَتْ خِذْلَانًا ، وَهِيَ فِي ذَاتِهَا وَاحِدَةٌ ، كَمَا أَنَّ السَّجْدَةَ إِذَا كَانَتْ لِلَّهِ سُمِّيَتْ طَاعَةً ، وَإِذَا كَانَتْ لِلصَّنَمِ سُمِّيَتْ مَعْصِيَةً ، وَهِيَ فِي ذَاتِهَا وَاحِدَةٌ وَهِيَ وَضْعُ الْجَبْهَةِ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ ، وَإِنَّمَا اخْتَلَفَ الْاِسْمُ بِاخْتِلَافِ النِّسْبَةِ ، فَكَذَا هَذَا . وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

ON ONTOLOGY OF HUMAN ACTION

Sunni orthodoxy—may God grant them victory—affirms that the actions of humans and of all animals are created directly by God, the exalted; none besides God brings them into existence, whether what is brought into existence is a substance or an accident. The Prophet's companions and their followers were of this opinion until the Qadarites came about and invented[7] the opinion that the volitional acts of all animals are created by themselves, having no connection to God's creative act and omnipotent power.

This is a false position, due to the statement of God, the exalted, "That is God, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, creator of everything" (6:102) as well as the Exalted's statement "Or do they make, besides God, partners, who create just as He creates? So the act of creating became confusing for them. Say: God is creator of everything" (13:16)—He praises Himself for that which He alone does, so this entails that no one shares with Him in the creation of anything, whatsoever. Likewise is the statement of God, the exalted, "And God creates you and what you do" (37:96): according to all grammarians, when the word "what" [in Arabic] is conjoined with a verb, it is used to denote the gerund [or verbal noun], such as with the statement "What you made impressed me" (that is, "Your making"). So what is meant by the verse—and God knows best—is "God creates you and your performance of actions." Indeed, the Messenger of God ﷺ explicitly stated this [tenet] when he said, "Verily, God is the creator of every maker and of his making."[8]

القَوْلُ فِي خَلْقِ أَفْعَالِ الْعِبَادِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ ، نَصَرَهُمُ اللهُ تَعَالَى ، أَفْعَالُ الْعِبَادِ وَجَمِيعِ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ مَخْلُوقٌ لِلهِ تَعَالَى ، لَا مُوجِدَ لَهَا إِلَّا اللهُ تَعَالَى ، سَوَاءٌ كَانَ الْمُوجَدُ عَيْنًا أَوْ عَرَضًا . وَعَلَى هَذَا كَانَتِ الصَّحَابَةُ وَالتَّابِعُونَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ إِلَى أَنْ حَدَثَتِ الْقَدَرِيَّةُ فَأَحْدَثَتِ الْقَوْلَ بِأَنَّ الْأَفْعَالَ الْاِخْتِيَارِيَّةَ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ بِخَلْقِهَا إِيَّاهَا لَا تَعَلُّقَ لَهَا بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَقُدْرَتِهِ .

وَهُوَ قَوْلٌ بَاطِلٌ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْۖ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَۖ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَيۡءٍ ﴾ ؛ وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ أَمۡ جَعَلُواْ لِلَّهِ شُرَكَآءَ خَلَقُواْ كَخَلۡقِهِۦ فَتَشَٰبَهَ ٱلۡخَلۡقُ عَلَيۡهِمۡۚ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَيۡءٍ ﴾ ، مَدَحَ نَفْسَهُ بِمَا تَفَرَّدَ بِهِ عَنْ غَيْرِهِ فَاقْتَضَى أَن لَا يُشَارِكَهُ أَحَدٌ فِي خَلْقِ شَيْءٍ مَا ؛ وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمۡ وَمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ ﴾ ، وَكَلِمَةُ « مَا » إِذَا ذُكِرَتْ (قُرِنَتْ) مَعَ الْفِعْلِ يُرَادُ بِهَا الْمَصْدَرُ عِنْدَ جَمِيعِ النَّحْوِيِّينَ ، كَمَا يُقَالُ أَعْجَبَنِي مَا صَنَعْتَ أَيْ صُنْعُكَ ، فَيَكُونُ الْمُرَادُ مِنَ الْآيَةِ ، وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ ، وَاللهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَعَمَلَكُمْ ؛ وَنَصَّ عَلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَيْثُ قَالَ « إِنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ صَانِعٍ وَصَنْعَتَهُ » .

As for rational evidence, the act of the servant is originated (*muḥdath*), and thus its existence is *possible* [as opposed to *necessary* or *impossible*]; so the possibility of its existence is logically equivalent to that of its nonexistence. Therefore, its existence cannot predominate [over its nonexistence] without specification by a determiner whose existence is *necessary*—namely, God, the exalted. With this, we overcame the atheists in their denial of ascribing the existence of substances to God, the exalted, so now we overcome the Mu'tazilites as well in their denial of ascribing the existence of actions to God, the exalted, as the two [substances and actions] are equivalent with respect to "existence." Moreover, if the servant is able to create movement in himself, then we will ask, "Is God, the exalted, able to create stillness in him at that exact moment, or not?" If you say He is able to, the result is co-existence of mutually exclusive opposites; if you say He is unable to, inability has been ascribed to God. Both results are logically impossible. Also, the condition of being able to create is that, before the existence of the created thing, the creator have knowledge of its inherent qualities [or modality], due to the statement of God, the exalted, "Does not the One who creates, know? He is ever-subtle, well-informed" (67:14). For one without knowledge of an act surely has no power over it, and the servant usually has no knowledge of his action's inherent qualities (such as its goodness, evil, harm, or benefit), just as a disbeliever or innovator knows not regarding the evil of his actions. Therefore, it is impossible for him [the servant] to be a creator.

If it is said: If you conclude that the servant cannot possibly bring [something] into existence, then he cannot act in the first place, since to *act* has no meaning other than "to bring into existence." We respond: Since we are in agreement with our opponent that the servant performs actions, and we have established proofs that he cannot possibly bring them into existence, it is confirmed then that he performs acts without bringing them into existence.

وَأَمَّا الْمَعْقُولُ وَهُوَ أَنَّ فِعْلَ الْعَبْدِ مُحْدَثٌ ، وَهُوَ جَائِزُ الْوُجُودِ ، فَيَسْتَوِي فِيهِ إِمْكَانُ الْوُجُودِ وَالْعَدَمِ ، فَلَا يَتَرَجَّحُ الْوُجُودُ إِلَّا بِتَخْصِيصِ مُخَصِّصٍ هُوَ وَاجِبُ الْوُجُودِ ، وَهُوَ اللهُ تَعَالَى . وَبِهَذَا أَلْزَمْنَا الدَّهْرِيَّةَ فِي إِنْكَارِهِمْ نِسْبَةَ وُجُودِ الْأَعْيَانِ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى ، فَنُلْزِمُ الْمُعْتَزِلَةَ أَيْضًا فِي إِنْكَارِهِمْ نِسْبَةَ وُجُودِ الْأَفْعَالِ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى ، إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْوُجُودِ سَوَاءٌ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْعَبْدَ مَتَى كَانَ قَادِرًا عَلَى إِيجَادِ الْحَرَكَةِ فِي نَفْسِهِ فَنَقُولُ هَلْ يَقْدِرُ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى إِيجَادِ السُّكُونِ فِي نَفْسِهِ فِي تِلْكَ الْحَالَةِ أَمْ لَا ؟ إِنْ قُلْتُمْ يَقْدِرُ ، لَزِمَ اجْتِمَاعُ الضِّدَّيْنِ ، وَإِنْ قُلْتُمْ لَا يَقْدِرُ ، لَزِمَ تَعْجِيزُ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَكِلَاهُمَا مُحَالٌ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ شَرْطَ قُدْرَةِ التَّخْلِيقِ عِلْمُ الْخَالِقِ بِكَيْفِيَّةِ الْمَخْلُوقِ قَبْلَ وُجُودِهِ ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ ٱللَّطِيفُ ٱلْخَبِيرُ ﴾ ، إِذْ مَن لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ بِفِعْلٍ أَصْلًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ ، وَلَا عِلْمَ لِلْعَبْدِ بِكَيْفِيَّةِ فِعْلِهِ غَالِبًا مِنَ الْحُسْنِ وَالْقُبْحِ وَالْإِضْرَارِ وَالْاِنْتِفَاعِ ، كَمَا لَا عِلْمَ لِلْكَافِرِ وَالْمُبْتَدِعِ بِقُبْحِ أَفْعَالِهِمَا ، فَلَا يُتَصَوَّرُ أَن يَكُونَ خَالِقًا .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ إِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بِاسْتِحَالَةِ الْإِيجَادِ مِنَ الْعَبْدِ فَإِذَن لَا فِعْلَ لَهُ أَصْلًا ، إِذْ لَا مَعْنَى لِلْفِعْلِ سِوَى الْإِيجَادِ . قُلْنَا لَمَّا اتَّفَقْنَا مَعَ الْخَصْمِ عَلَى قِيَامِ الْفِعْلِ بِالْعَبْدِ وَأَقَمْنَا الدَّلَائِلَ عَلَى اسْتِحَالَةِ الْإِيجَادِ مِنَ الْعَبْدِ ثَبَتَ أَنَّ لَهُ فِعْلًا وَلَيْسَ بِإِيجَادٍ .

We then state that the servant has two types of attributes:

1. what God creates in him without his choice or control, like the movements of one with a tremor; and
2. what God creates in him along with his own power, will, and choice, like voluntary movements.

This distinction is necessarily known; the second type is termed *kasb*, and the other type *creation* (*khalq*).[9] There is no term that accurately describes [voluntary human action] except *kasb*, just as there is a clear, absolute difference between pleasure and pain, each of which cannot be described except with its specific word.

The upshot, then, is that the action of the servant is termed *kasb*, not *creation*, and the act of God is termed *creation*, not *kasb*; the word *action* (*fiʿl*) encompasses them both.[10] This is according to us. According to the Ashʿarī scholars, *action* is a term that literally means "to cause to exist," while *kasb* is called *action* metaphorically. The correct position is ours, though, since unconditioned usage indicates the literal meaning. Also, one of the conditions of a metaphor [in Arabic] is that between the literal and metaphorical usages there be a sort of resemblance in a particular meaning, whereby the word is borrowed from the literal usage and applied to the metaphorical one, to indicate that meaning; yet there is no resemblance at all between the servant's *kasb* and God's causing to exist, so metaphorical usage does not obtain.

ثُمَّ نَقُولُ مَا يَقُومُ بِالْعَبْدِ مِنَ الصِّفَاتِ نَوْعَانِ: نَوْعٌ يُوجِدُهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِ بِدُونِ قُدْرَتِهِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ كَحَرَكَاتِ الْمُرْتَعِشِ، وَالثَّانِي يُوجِدُهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِ مَعَ قُدْرَتِهِ وَإِرَادَتِهِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ كَالْحَرَكَاتِ الِاخْتِيَارِيَّةِ.

وَهَذِهِ التَّفْرِقَةُ مَعْلُومَةٌ بِالضَّرُورَةِ. وَسُمِّيَ هَذَا النَّوْعُ الثَّانِي كَسْبًا، وَالْآخَرُ خَلْقًا، وَقَصُرَتِ الْعِبَارَةُ عَنْهُ إِلَّا بِلَفْظِ الْكَسْبِ، كَمَا أَنَّ التَّفْرِقَةَ بَيْنَ اللَّذَّةِ وَالْأَلَمِ مَعْلُومَةٌ قَطْعًا وَلَا يُعَبَّرُ عَنْهُمَا إِلَّا بِهَاتَيْنِ اللَّفْظَتَيْنِ.

فَالْحَاصِلُ أَنَّ فِعْلَ الْعَبْدِ يُسَمَّى كَسْبًا لَا خَلْقًا، وَفِعْلَ اللهِ تَعَالَى يُسَمَّى خَلْقًا لَا كَسْبًا، وَاسْمُ «الْفِعْلِ» يَشْمَلُهُمَا، وَهَذَا عِنْدَنَا. وَعِنْدَ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةِ الْفِعْلُ عِبَارَةٌ عَنِ الْإِيجَادِ حَقِيقَةً إِلَّا أَنَّ الْكَسْبَ يُسَمَّى فِعْلًا مَجَازًا.

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا ذَهَبْنَا إِلَيْهِ، لِأَنَّ الِاسْتِعْمَالَ الْمُطْلَقَ يَدُلُّ عَلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ، وَلِأَنَّ مِنْ شَرْطِ الْمَجَازِ أَن يَكُونَ بَيْنَ مَحَلِّ الْحَقِيقَةِ وَالْمَجَازِ نَوْعُ مُشَابَهَةٍ فِي مَعْنًى مَخْصُوصٍ، فَيُسْتَعَارُ اللَّفْظُ عَن مَحَلِّ الْحَقِيقَةِ إِلَى مَحَلِّ الْمَجَازِ لِإِفَادَةِ ذَلِكَ الْمَعْنَى، وَلَا مُشَابَهَةَ بَيْنَ كَسْبِ الْعَبْدِ وَإِيجَادِ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِوَجْهٍ مِنَ الْوُجُوهِ، فَلَا يَتَحَقَّقُ الْمَجَازُ.

Furthermore, based on what we have said, the possibility for one act to come about from two agents with ability is established, yet with the [critical] qualification of being from different perspectives; the same action is the effect of divine power from the perspective of causing to exist, and the effect of human power from the perspective of *kasb*. The difference between creation and *kasb* is that the former occurs without any means, while the latter occurs with some means. It is also said that creation is that which the doer may do independently, while *kasb* cannot be done independently. *Kasb*, then, is specific to the servant, and creation specific to God, the exalted. This distinction applies if *creation* refers to "causing to exist."

If *creation* refers to "measuring" (*taqdīr*), though, then it can apply to the servant too, as God, the exalted, informs [us] regarding Jesus ﷺ, "And when you create from clay, as the form of a bird" (5:110)—that is, "[when] you measure [from clay]." This is what is meant by the statement of God, the exalted, "Blessed is God, the best of creators" (23:14)—that is, "the best of those who measure."[11]

If it is said: If your position were correct, that the action of the servant is his *kasb* yet God's creation, then that act would be shared between God, the exalted, and His servant. We respond: The definition of *sharing* between two entities is for each of the two to alone own his particular portion of a whole, like a slave owned by two [masters], each owning half the slave such that what one owns is not owned by the other. However, if the entire slave belonged to one party from one perspective and to the other from another perspective, the slave would not be shared between the two, such as a slave who is leased by someone—

وَثَبَتَ بِمَا ذَكَرْنَا جَوَازُ مَقْدُورٍ بَيْنَ قَادِرَيْنِ وَلَكِن بِجِهَتَيْنِ مُخْتَلِفَتَيْنِ، فَيَكُونُ الْفِعْلُ مَقْدُورًا لِلهِ تَعَالَى بِجِهَةِ الْإِيجَادِ وَمَقْدُورًا لِلْعَبْدِ بِجِهَةِ الْكَسْبِ. وَالْفَرْقُ بَيْنَ الْخَلْقِ وَالْكَسْبِ أَنَّ مَا وَقَعَ بِغَيْرِ آلَةٍ فَهُوَ خَلْقٌ، وَمَا وَقَعَ بِآلَةٍ فَهُوَ كَسْبٌ. وَقِيلَ مَا يَجُوزُ تَفَرُّدُ الْقَادِرِ بِهِ فَهُوَ خَلْقٌ، وَمَا لَا يَجُوزُ تَفَرُّدُ الْقَادِرِ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَسْبٌ. فَيَخْتَصُّ الْكَسْبُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْخَلْقُ بِاللهِ تَعَالَى. هَذَا إِذَا كَانَ الْخَلْقُ بِمَعْنَى الْإِيجَادِ.

وَأَمَّا الْخَلْقُ بِمَعْنَى التَّقْدِيرِ فَيَجُوزُ مِنَ الْعَبْدِ أَيْضًا، كَمَا أَخْبَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْ عِيسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ﴿ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيْـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيْرِ ﴾ أَيْ تُقَدِّرُ، وَهُوَ الْمُرَادُ بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ فَتَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ ٱلْخَٰلِقِينَ ﴾ أَيْ أَحْسَنُ الْمُقَدِّرِينَ.

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ صَحَّ مَا ذَكَرْتُمْ أَنَّ فِعْلَ الْعَبْدِ مِنَ الْعَبْدِ كَسْبٌ وَمِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى خَلْقٌ، كَانَ الْفِعْلُ مُشْتَرَكًا بَيْنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِهِ. قُلْنَا حَدُّ الشِّرْكَةِ بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ أَن يَخْتَصَّ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا بِنَصِيبِهِ، كَالْعَبْدِ الْمُشْتَرَكِ بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ، يَكُونُ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا نِصْفُ الْعَبْدِ، وَمَا يَكُونُ لِأَحَدِهِمَا لَا يَكُونُ لِلْآخَرِ. وَأَمَّا لَوْ كَانَ كُلُّ الْعَبْدِ لِأَحَدِهِمَا بِجِهَةٍ وَلِلْآخَرِ بِجِهَةٍ أُخْرَى، لَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مُشْتَرَكًا بَيْنَهُمَا، كَمَنْ آجَرَ عَبْدَهُ مِنْ إِنْسَانٍ،

the entire slave belongs to the lessor with respect to ownership, and to the lessee with respect to right of usage; one would not say that the slave is shared between the two parties.

The following, however, is clearer than all of the above: every slave is his owner's property from the perspective of purchase, and his Creator's property from the perspective of granting existence; would anyone suggest that the slave is shared between God, the exalted, and His servant [that is, the owner]? Rather, sharing [partnership with the Divine] is entailed in the view of our opponent—namely, for some accidents to occur by the creative act of God and for other accidents to occur by the creative act of human beings. So for someone of this [untenable] opinion to impute sharing to the position of his opponent [that is, us] entails utter impudence and obstinacy. And enablement is by God alone.[12]

ON OCCASIONALISM AND THE NEGATION OF SECONDARY CAUSATION

Based on our previous discussion, it is established that effects of human actions occur only by the creation of God, the exalted, and His causing their existence. They are not brought into existence by humans themselves nor caused by their actions, as is the opinion of most of the Qadarites. [The Muʿtazilite] al-Naẓẓām[13] [d. 231/845] held that while they are the act of God, the exalted, they transpire by way of necessary causation, with which human nature is endowed (*ījāb al-ṭabʿ*); al-Qalānisī [had the same opinion, since he] held that they are the act of God, the exalted, yet transpire by the necessary causation of human nature (*ījāb al-khilqah*).[14] Thumāmah b. al-Ashras[15] [d. 213/828] held they are an act without any doer at all.

The correct position (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is what we state, because if these effects occur by the act of the servant, they do so either without any ability or by the ability with which the act itself occurs or by another ability.

يَكُونُ كُلُّ الْعَبْدِ لِلْآجِرِ بِمِلْكِ الرَّقَبَةِ وَلِلْمُسْتَأْجِرِ بِمِلْكِ الْمَنْفَعَةِ ، وَلَا يُقَالُ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ مُشْتَرَكٌ بَيْنَهُمَا .

وَأَوْضَحُ مِنْ هَذَا كُلِّهِ أَنَّ كُلَّ عَبْدٍ مِلْكٌ لِمَالِكِهِ بِجِهَةِ الشِّرَى وَمِلْكٌ لِخَالِقِهِ بِجِهَةِ التَّخْلِيقِ ، فَهَل لِقَائِلٍ أَن يَقُولَ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ مُشْتَرَكٌ بَيْنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَبَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ . بَلِ الشِّرْكَةُ فِيمَا يَزْعُمُ الْخَصْمُ أَنَّ بَعْضَ الْأَعْرَاضِ بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَبَعْضَهَا بِخَلْقِ الْعِبَادِ ، فَيَكُونُ إِحَالَةُ الشِّرْكَةِ مَعَ هَذَا الْقَوْلِ إِلَى مَن يُخَالِفُهُ مِنَ الْوَقَاحَةِ وَالْعِنَادِ . وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

القَوْلُ فِي إِبْطَالِ التَّوْلِيدِ

وَثَبَتَ بِمَا ذَكَرْنَا أَنَّ آثَارَ أَفْعَالِ الْعِبَادِ بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَإِيجَادِهِ ، لَا بِإِيجَادِ الْعِبَادِ وَلَا مُتَوَلِّدَةٌ مِنْ أَفْعَالِهِمْ كَمَا زَعَمَتْ عَامَّةُ الْقَدَرِيَّةِ . وَزَعَمَ النَّظَّامُ أَنَّهَا فِعْلُ اللهِ تَعَالَى بِإِيجَابِ الطَّبْعِ . وَقَالَ الْقَلَانِسِيُّ إِنَّهَا فِعْلُ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَلَكِن بِإِيجَابِ الْخِلْقَةِ . وَزَعَمَ ثُمَامَةُ بْنُ الْأَشْرَسِ أَنَّهَا فِعْلٌ لَا فَاعِلَ لَهَا .

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا قُلْنَا ، لِأَنَّ هَذِهِ الْآثَارَ لَوْ حَصَلَتْ بِفِعْلِ الْعَبْدِ لَا يَخْلُو إِمَّا أَنْ حَصَلَتْ بِدُونِ الْقُدْرَةِ أَوْ بِالْقُدْرَةِ الَّتِي حَصَلَ بِهَا الْفِعْلُ أَوْ بِقُدْرَةٍ أُخْرَى .

The first is untenable due to the impossibility of action without ability. The second is untenable since that ability is concurrent with the act and would hence cease to exist at the time of the [subsequent] effect. And the third is untenable because it entails that the human is able to bring about the effect without the act, or to perform the act without its effect (such as pain without hitting or hitting without pain), since one who is able to do two things is perforce able to do each of the two independently. Moreover, it is possible that the hitter die immediately after the hit and the pain occur afterwards, yet an act by a dead person is impossible.

Rather, God, the exalted, runs the course of habitual pattern [of His activity] (*ʿādah*) by creating the effect (*athar*) immediately after human performance of the [apparent] causal act (*sabab*).[16] So when the human performs the [apparent] causal act with the intention of bringing about that effect, [the effect] is ascribed to him, whereby customarily [for an evil act] blame is directed toward him, and legally he is penalized in this life and punished in the next life, even though the effect does not ontologically occur by his act. For example, if a person cuts someone's leather-skin pouch such that its oil spills, then customarily he is blamed for it and legally he is taken to account, even though the spilling itself did not ontologically occur by his doing. However, because he undertook the means with the intention of bringing about that effect, the effect is ascribed to him. The same, then, applies here. And God alone is the One who enables and the One who guides.

لَا وَجْهَ إِلَى الْأَوَّلِ لِاسْتِحَالَةِ تَعَرِّي الْفِعْلِ عَنِ الْقُدْرَةِ. وَلَا وَجْهَ إِلَى الثَّانِي لِأَنَّ تِلْكَ الْقُدْرَةَ مُقَارِنَةٌ لِلْفِعْلِ فَتَنْعَدِمُ وَقْتَ الْأَثَرِ. وَلَا وَجْهَ إِلَى الثَّالِثِ لِأَنَّهُ يَقْتَضِي أَن يَقْدِرَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى تَحْصِيلِ الْأَثَرِ بِدُونِ الْفِعْلِ أَوْ تَحْصِيلِ الْفِعْلِ بِدُونِ الْأَثَرِ، كَالْأَلَمِ بِدُونِ الضَّرْبِ وَالضَّرْبِ بِدُونِ الْأَلَمِ، إِذْ مَنْ قَدَرَ عَلَى الشَّيْئَيْنِ كَانَ قَادِرًا عَلَى كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا عَلَى الْإِنْفِرَادِ، وَلِأَنَّهُ يَجُوزُ أَن يَمُوتَ الضَّارِبُ عَقِيبَ الضَّرْبِ وَالْأَلَمُ يَحْدُثُ بَعْدَهُ، وَالْفِعْلُ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ مُحَالٌ.

إِلَّا أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى أَجْرَى الْعَادَةَ بِخَلْقِ الْأَثَرِ عَقِيبَ مُبَاشَرَةِ السَّبَبِ، فَإِذَا بَاشَرَ الْعَبْدُ السَّبَبَ بِقَصْدِ حُصُولِ الْأَثَرِ أُضِيفَ إِلَيْهِ وَتَوَجَّهَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّائِمَةُ عُرْفًا وَلَزِمَتْهُ الْغَرَامَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْعُقُوبَةُ فِي الْعُقْبَى شَرْعًا، وَإِن لَمْ يَكُنِ الْأَثَرُ حَاصِلًا بِفِعْلِهِ حَقِيقَةً. كَمَنْ شَقَّ زِقَّ إِنْسَانٍ حَتَّى سَالَ الدُّهْنُ، فَإِنَّهُ يُلَامُ عَلَيْهِ عُرْفًا وَيُؤَاخَذُ بِهِ شَرْعًا وَإِن لَمْ يَكُنِ السَّيَلَانُ بِفِعْلِهِ حَقِيقَةً. وَلَكِن لَمَّا بَاشَرَ السَّبَبَ لِقَصْدِ حُصُولِ الْأَثَرِ أُضِيفَ إِلَيْهِ، فَكَذَا هَذَا.

وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ وَالْهَادِي.

Annotations to *Divine Omnipotence, Human Agency, and Ontology of the World*

In his theological treatise *ʿAqīdat ahl al-sunnah*, the Ashʿarī and mystic Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hāshimī wrote: "It is rationally possible for God to create wisdom (*ḥikmah*) in His actions and rulings." In his commentary on his treatise, Shaykh al-Hāshimī explained his statement as follows:

> The wisdom that is possible in divine actions and rulings is "benefit that ensues from an act," without that benefit being a motivating factor for Him [since God is transcendent above having motives or being incited to act]. Of course, the benefit of His actions returns to His creation, meaning that He deals with them in a way that entails a praiseworthy end, which itself is neither logically necessary nor logically impossible. "He is not asked about what He does, but they shall be asked" (Qur'an 21:23).
>
> As for His name *al-Ḥakīm* (the all-wise), its meaning according to the Ashʿarī school is the Absolute King, who does whatever He wills: "He is not asked about what He does, but they shall be asked." So, according to al-Ashʿarī, the wisdom that is *necessary* for God's actions and rulings is complete eternal knowledge and perfect performance, and its opposite is foolishness (*safah*). So *wisdom*, according to the Ashʿarī school, has two meanings: (1) complete knowledge and perfect performance (that is, for a thing to occur in exact correspondence with the aim of its

doer); this is an eternal attribute of God, the exalted, and its opposite is foolishness; and (2) a quality of the thing acted upon [that is, what results from the act of creating]; this meaning is "doing something with perfection"—that is, [God's] creating every single thing in a way that is more suitable for it, and placing it in its appropriate place. This quality is not an eternal attribute, because it pertains to the action itself, and according to [the Ashʿarī scholars], divine attributes of action are temporal (*ḥādithah*).

According to the Māturīdī scholars though, wisdom [with this latter meaning] is an eternal attribute of God, the exalted. This is why they state that God's actions are never devoid of wisdom, meaning that which has a praiseworthy end and the opposite of which is foolishness. Imam al-Ashʿarī's position, however, is that wisdom with this meaning is not an eternal attribute of God, the exalted, [but is rather temporal] since ultimately it is an attribute of action (and according to them, divine attributes of action are temporal). His school explained the wisdom that is *necessary* for divine action as "[that which] occurs in exact correspondence with the aim of its doer" [the former meaning], and its opposite is foolishness; they explained the wisdom that is *possible* for divine action as "benefit that ensues from an act," meaning that which entails a praiseworthy end with respect to what is created, without that outcome in any way motivating God to act. Neither the existence nor nonexistence of this "wisdom" entails logical contradiction, and "He is not asked about what He does, but they shall be asked."

The upshot is that divine wisdom is rationally possible according to the Ashʿarī scholars, as opposed to the Māturīdī scholars, [who deem it rationally necessary,] while according to both, it is affirmed as necessary based on scripture. So whoever reflects on this issue shall conclude that the difference between the two [Sunni schools] is but semantic. (*Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 190–91)

2 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

> To proceed, wisdom is [one] of the attributes of praise and perfection, while foolishness is [one] of the attributes of blame and deficiency. The entire community [of scholars and theologians] agrees that wisdom is ascribed to God, the exalted, and that He is transcendent above any foolishness. However, they differ among themselves concerning whether *certain actions* are considered wise or foolish: whoever considers them to be wise deems them as possible from the Divine, while those who consider them to be foolish assert the impossibility of such acts from the all-wise Creator. The category under which all of these topics fall is called "ascription of justice or injustice to the Divine" (*al-taʿdīl wa al-tajwīr*). We shall begin with the topic of "ontology of human action" because it is foundational, yet we preface that discussion with a treatment of "potency and human agency" because it is introductory to the other topics. (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 54r. [BT])

Here, the author provides the theoretical backdrop and sequential logic for the next several sections. Although he is referring specifically to the arrangement of his larger work *Al-Kifāyah*, his comments apply also to *Al-Bidāyah* because it is a summation of *Al-Kifāyah*.

3 Māturīdī scholars generally distinguish between two types of human ability [to act]: The first is the soundness of one's limbs and faculties (*salāmat al-asbāb wa al-ālāt*), which by consensus precedes an act. It is not actual human ability [power to perform the act], since ability is an accident and accidents do not last two moments, while actual human ability must coexist with the act in order for it to be the ability to perform that act. Hence, the second type of ability is actual ability (*ḥaqīqat al-qudrah*), which coexists with the act. Both actual human ability and its associated human act are created by God, the exalted, in the same moment. When the act is one of obedience, the actual ability is termed *success and enablement to do good* (*tawfīq*); when the act is one of disobedience, the

ability is termed *being forsaken by the Divine* (*khidhlān*). Some Māturīdī scholars state that actual ability (*ḥaqīqat al-qudrah*) is related to the human's firm decision to act (*ʿazm muṣammam*), which they state has a sort of causal efficacy (*ta'thīr*) related to the voluntary act and is what they term *kasb*.

The causal efficacy of Māturīdī *kasb* needs explanation, as many researchers and even some scholars have misunderstood it. The discussion here will be prefaced by an explanation of Ashʿarī *kasb* taken from the Ashʿarī Imam al-Dardīr (d. 1201/1786), who states, "God's power brings things from nonexistence into existence, in accordance with His will; this is termed *creation* or causing to exist, and is what is meant by 'the association (*taʿalluq*) of eternal divine power.' As for *our* power, it is associated with some acts—namely voluntary acts, meaning those actions in which we have choice, inclination, and aim, yet without any role in creation or causing to exist. This association (*taʿalluq*), which corresponds with our will, is what is termed *kasb* (*iktisāb*)" (Muḥammad Bakhīt al-Muṭīʿī, *Ḥāshiyah ʿalā sharḥ al-Dardīr ʿalā al-kharīdah fī ʿilm al-tawḥīd* [Cairo: Dār al-Baṣā'ir, 2006], 65).

Imam al-Dardīr continues,

> So associated with our voluntary acts are two powers: eternal divine power (*qudrah qadīmah*) and temporal human power (*qudrah ḥādithah*) [that is, the actual human ability that God, the exalted, creates in the same moment He, the exalted, creates the associated human act]. Temporal power has no causal efficacy; it has mere correspondence (*muqāranah*) [with the associated human act]. So God, the exalted, creates the human act *with it* (*ʿindahā*), not even *by means of* it (*bihā*), just as with [the effect of] burning when fire touches wood. So inasmuch as He, the exalted, creates for us an inclination toward something and an aim to do it, and creates for us a power that is simultaneous with His creating of the action that we aimed to do, He, the exalted, ascribes that action to us and holds us morally accountable for it, because on the surface it appears to be the person's action. Yet

> by reflecting on the categorical evidence of divine oneness, one attains full conviction that every action is brought into existence only by God, the exalted [and none besides]; otherwise, He, the exalted, would have a partner—glorious is He above that. So it is understood that this association (*taᶜalluq*) refers to the correspondence of temporal power [to human actions], without any causal efficacy; that is the basis of ascribing actions to people, as He, the exalted, states, "For the soul is every good that it acquires, and against the soul is every evil that it acquires" (2:286). And this is the basis of divine reward or punishment, out of either divine grace or justice; in that way does the human have free will. (65–66)

The Hanafi Muḥammad Bakhīt al-Muṭīᶜī (d. 1354/1935) comments,

> This correspondence (*muqāranah*) is the customary means with respect to God's creating of human actions in a person. That is, the customary pattern of God's activity is that when a human directs his will and power to an action, God's will and power are associated with that act in the person. So "what is acquired" (*maksūb*) is an act that occurs in the locus of human power [that is, the human act that is created concurrently with actual human power], while the *kasb* is that correspondence itself. This explanation is taken from [the text] *Al-Mawāqif* [of the Ashᶜarī ᶜAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī], and is the well-known position of the Ashᶜarī school. (65–66)

Shaykh al-Muṭīᶜī then presents a different view of *kasb*, apparently held by Imam al-Ashᶜarī himself (but not his school), that ascribes to human ability a sort of causal efficacy for voluntary acts, though still based on divine permission; he cites the *Kitāb al-ibānah* of Imam al-Ashᶜarī as the source and states that this view is the actual position held by Imam al-Ashᶜarī, since in his opinion the *Kitāb al-ibānah* was the last work of Imam al-Ashᶜarī and thus the most reliable in conveying his opinions. However, the vast majority of Ashᶜarī scholars did not regard the *Kitāb al-ibānah* as being his final book, and many Ashᶜarī scholars did not even accept that he

wrote it, arguing that it was falsely ascribed to Imam al-Ashʿarī by later anthropomorphists to push their heresies. For a concise case study on the *Kitāb al-ibānah*, see ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī, *The Attributes of God*, trans. Abdullah bin Hamid Ali (Bristol, UK: Amal Press, 2006), 117–23.

Shaykh al-Muṭīʿī continues,

> The Māturīdī scholars and [the Ashʿarī] al-Qāḍī [al-Bāqillānī, d. 405/1013] state that the human has a "particular will" (*irādah juz'iyyah*), which refers to the association of human will with either performing or refraining from an act; it emanates from the person by his choice and itself is not created by God, the exalted, because it does not have actual objective existence. Rather, [the particular will] is only a metaphysical consideration (*amr iʿtibārī*), just like the qualification of an act as either obedience or disobedience; or it is from the category of "intermediary states" (*ḥāl*, pl. *aḥwāl*) between existence and nonexistence, as was the opinion of [the Bukharan Hanafi] Ṣadr al-Sharīʿah [d. 747/1346]. Thus, this view does not entail that the person is a creator of some existents [that is, his actions] or that he causes them to exist.
>
> And this particular will is an insufficient [meaning "itself incapable of causing any effect"] customary means with respect to the causal efficacy of God's omnipotent power. This differs from Imam al-Ashʿarī's view, for even though [he states that] the particular will is the customary means [of God, the exalted] for [His] causal efficacy, according to him it actually has objective existence and hence itself is created by God, the exalted. Thus, human power has no causal efficacy whatsoever, despite its role as being the customary means [of how God, the exalted, creates], for which reason al-Ashʿarī's view has been termed intermediate determinism (*jabr mutawassiṭ*). (66–67)

Hence, the causal efficacy of Māturīdī *kasb* is not *ontic* causal efficacy, since according to them, what is causal has no actual existence. It is rather a causal efficacy *of qualification* (causing an

act to be qualified as "intentionally performed" or "intentionally not performed"), similar to human causal efficacy of *moral qualification* (causing an act to be qualified with a moral property of either obedience or disobedience), given that *kasb* is the doctrine of human free will that explains how moral agency occurs through the agent's intention—the acquisition of one's actions based upon the intention, within the confines of divine enablement. For example, the physical movements entailed in prostrating toward the Kaᶜbah in prayer versus prostrating toward an idol are ontologically identical, both brought into existence by God, the exalted, alone, yet it is the human agent's knowledge and choice that qualifies the former as morally praiseworthy (obedience to God) and the latter as morally reprehensible (disobedience to God). Similarly, Māturīdī *kasb* qualifies the act as being chosen by the human or voluntarily abstained from by the human; that is its only causal efficacy, according to the Māturīdī school—a view similar to that held by the Ashᶜarī scholastic al-Qāḍī al-Bāqillānī.

However, Shaykh al-Muṭīᶜī still finds the Māturīdī view problematic and prefers the dominant Ashᶜarī view, stating, "Having said that, the problem with the view of the Māturīdī scholars and al-Qāḍī [al-Bāqillānī] is that the person has causal efficacy with that metaphysical consideration (*amr iᶜtibārī*), which they call 'particular will,' and there is no meaning of 'causal efficacy with a consideration,' except as entailing 'causal efficacy with the existent act that ensues [from that metaphysical consideration].' Therefore, the person would effectively have causal efficacy with something actually existent. But this is absurd and untenable, since there is no agent that can cause something to exist, whatsoever, except God alone" (67).

Still, the Māturīdī scholars might respond that the actual existent act does not *necessarily* ensue from the metaphysical consideration, but only *customarily* so, by God's creating the act in correspondence with the metaphysical consideration. Thus, there is no inherent necessity between what the human has

causal efficacy with and what has actual objective existence; so in the Māturīdī view, the human does not even *effectively* cause the existence of the act.

4 Here, "renewal of likenesses" refers to Sunni atomistic ontology, which holds that the cosmos is made up of indivisible particles to which are ascribed accidents, which do not last two moments. So with respect to any accident that appears to last over time (such as the redness of a rose, the liquidity of water, human faculties and abilities), what actually occurs is that God, the exalted, repeatedly creates its replica (or "likeness") in each subsequent moment. This is the position of Imam al-Ashʿarī as well. See al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 121.

Hence, while no accident *literally* continues into a second moment, it *effectively* does so because of the divine fiat of "renewing the likeness" of that accident. And God's activity of re-creating things is perfectly consistent and fixed, such that the intellect has certainty of a thing's remaining itself in the course of its appointed term. Human knowledge of things is thus valid and possible, while things are essentially and literally dependent on God, the exalted, in every moment of their existence.

The objection in the text above is that just as all accidents have an effective continuity, so too can human ability to act effectively continue until the time of the human act. The Sunni response to the objection follows.

5 He is Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Qalānisī al-Rāzī, dialectical theologian in the generation of the companions of the distinguished Ashʿarī Ibn Fūrak. Some erroneously thought Imam al-Qalānisī preceded Imam al-Ashʿarī. See Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf al-sādah al-muttaqīn bi sharḥ iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 2:5–6.

6 He is Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Surayj, "the Shafi'i jurist of his age," judge and Ashʿarī dialectical theologian, who

authored around four hundred works. He died in the year 306/918. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 1:185.

To "invent," in this context, means to introduce into the Islamic tradition an idea that has no basis or chain of narration to the first generations of Muslims (*salaf*), even if the opinion existed beforehand outside of Islamic intellectual history. The main impetus for the Muʿtazilites to adopt this position—that volitional creatures create their own voluntary acts—was to account for moral responsibility and to rationally validate divine justice in taking humans to account for what they voluntarily do. Sunni orthodoxy viewed this idea as an abhorrent reduction of divine power, in view of the fact that only God, the exalted, creates things (whether substance or accident), as established by both reason and revelation. Like everything else in the cosmos, whether substance or accident, human voluntary actions are logically possible, and logical possibility is the basis of their inherent and essential ontic indigence (and from that perspective, logical possibility has no disparity). So rationally, if human actions were created by anyone or anything besides God, the exalted, those actions would be independent of Him. That notion contravenes monotheism itself. Thus, the absoluteness of divinity—that only God is without need, and that everything other than Him needs Him alone—entails that only God, the exalted, creates anything logically possible (whether the possible thing itself, its attributes, or its actions). To explain the basis of human accountability, though, the Sunnis articulated the doctrine of *kasb*: God, the exalted, creates human action, yet humans acquire their acts through their genuine experience of choice, which translates to voluntary action one innately knows as categorically distinct from one's involuntary action. See al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 122.

Hence, Sunnism sought to preserve both (1) the tenet of the universal scope of divine power, including over human action, along with (2) the principle of genuine human choice, which is the basis of man's moral responsibility. This creation-*kasb*

dichotomy (or doctrine of *kasb*) is an indigenous metaphysical position of the kalam tradition, and it has considerable implications for much philosophical discourse, in particular the problem of evil and suffering. Moral evil is still affirmed as existing ontologically by divine creation and as eternally decreed by God, the exalted, yet it is not ascribed to Him out of veneration and etiquette, whereas humans remain fully responsible for their choices, such that their evil is ascribed to them as moral agents. Islamic eschatology provides the backdrop against which all human action is correctly contextualized: horrific punishment will be meted out to tyrants who arrogantly persist in their tyranny, while their victims who persist in faith and piety will find joys of which no human mind has conceived. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ taught that even animals, despite having no moral responsibility, will take retribution on Judgment Day for harms inflicted on them by other animals, with the prey doing the same act to the predator as was done to it. A fortiori then with human beings.

This "outlook of everlasting consequences" is further coupled with the worldly benefits of suffering underscored in Islam's spiritual tradition: virtues such as sincerity (*ṣidq*); complete reliance on God, the exalted (*tawakkul*); recognition of one's need for the divine (*al-faqr ilā Allāh*); and humble servitude (*ʿubūdiyyah*). Ultimately, though, the foundational objection in the problem of evil commits the fallacy of "false analogy" because it presupposes a human measure or gauge of divine action. Yet in reality, "There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him" (42:11), "He is not asked about what He does, but they shall be asked [about what they did]" (21:23), and He is the "absolute doer of whatever He wills" (85:16).

Related to this last verse, the ontological reality of humanity's moral choices and actions is expressed in the following aphorism of Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1132/1721): "From the divine vantage, every human is in one of two realms: either the realm of divine mercy (*raḥmah*) [manifested as human faith

and morality] or the realm of divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*) [manifested as human unbelief and immorality]. So whoever today is in the former shall tomorrow be in divine grace (*faḍl*) [meaning paradise], and whoever today is in the latter shall tomorrow be in divine justice (*ʿadl*) [meaning hell]." The commentator on this aphorism notes,

> The basis of this is that to God, the exalted, were ascribed in eternity the attributes of mercy, such as generosity, kindness, gentleness, and compassion; as well as the attributes of punishment, such as domination, leading astray, and vengeance. So based on His will [that is, selection], He divided humanity into two categories: some were chosen to predominantly be loci of His attributes of mercy, even though they will occasionally experience divine wisdom and justice; others were chosen to predominantly be loci of His attributes of punishment, which incorporates wisdom, even though they will occasionally experience divine mercy and grace. Then He brought them out from nonexistence into the vast expanse of existence, and facilitated for each what was apportioned for him. Then, when He brings them forth on Judgment Day, He shall place those of the realm of mercy in countless blessings, into eternity, by His sheer grace; He shall place those of the realm of wisdom in endless suffering, into eternity, by His absolute justice. So whomever God grants ability to do good (*tawfīq*), let him praise none except God; whoever is afflicted with committing iniquity, let him blame none but himself. (al-Maydānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah*, 62–63.)

For detailed expositions of Islam and the problem of evil, see Keller, *Sea Without Shore*, 365–91; Jackson, *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering*; Hamza Yusuf, *The Prayer of the Oppressed* (Danville, CA: Sandala Productions, 2010), 1–31; and Timothy Winter, "Islam and the Problem of Evil," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Problem of Evil*, ed. Chad Meister and Paul K. Moser (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 230–48.

8 Imam al-Bukhārī cites this in the chapter "[God's] Creation of the Actions of His Servants" in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. Imam al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) relates with his chain of narrators to the Prophet's companion Ḥudhayfah ﷺ that God's Messenger ﷺ said, "Verily, God is the creator of every maker and of his making." Al-Suyūṭī comments, "This is a rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*) prophetic statement. [Imam] al-Ḥākim relates it [in *Al-Mustadrak*] and says it fulfills the conditions of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. [Imam] al-Dhahabī does not negate this in *Al-Talkhīṣ*, nor does [Ḥāfiẓ] al-ʿIrāqī [d. 806/1404] in his collection" (Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wuʿāh fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyyīn wa al-nuḥāh* [Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿādah, 1908], 271. [BT]).

9 Technically, both types of attribute are termed *God's creation*, as the author states next and as is evident in his definition of each type of attribute ("What God creates in him..."). The first type refers to human involuntary action and the second to human voluntary action. Because the latter is voluntary, it is also termed *kasb* from the vantage point of the person, while still being creation from the divine vantage. Also, *kasb* is defined as what God, the exalted, creates *along with* human power, will, and volition. The phrase "along with" is used instead of "through" or the like, since according to Sunni occasionalism, God, the exalted, does not create *through* secondary causes or means (which include human will and power), but rather *with them*—created means are but loci, or occasions, of the divine fiat. The assertion that God, the exalted, creates through anything is considered false because it entails likening God to His creation, since humans and other creatures use means/tools to attain their aims, and because it ascribes to God a sort of "need"—namely, the need for means/tools in fulfilling His decrees. See al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 120–24.

10 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*, "This is because the definition of *action* is to direct the logically possible from mere possibility to existence, and what is meant by *existence* in this context is actuality and objective [extra-mental] reality. However, God's 'directing' is

by actually granting existence to the logically possible, while the servant's 'directing' is to take the [mental] means [of one's free will] in intending the logically possible act. So the term *action* is general, while the term *creating* is specific to God, the exalted, and the term *kasb* is specific to the servant, as per what we have delineated" (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 62v. [BT]).

11 Of course, the "measuring" of humans is based on estimation and thought, while the "measuring" of God, the exalted, refers to His eternal knowledge and will. God, the exalted, is transcendent above estimation or thought since His knowledge is perfect and His will is absolute. See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb: Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr li al-Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*, 11 vols., 4th ed. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2001), 3:227–28 (commenting on Qur'an 3:49).

12 Imam al-Farhārī explains,

> Realize that the issue of free will versus determinism is among the most perplexing of issues, to the extent that it is related that our greatest scholar [Imam Abū Ḥanīfah] said, "The issue of free will has slain me." The early Muslims would remain silent on the matter and prohibit others from delving into it, and in fact some prophetic statements appear to indicate that proscription; yet later scholars were forced to investigate it in order to rebut the Jabarites and the Qadarites [deniers of predestination; a view adopted by many Mu'tazilites]. There are six positions on it [in Islamic intellectual history]: (1) The Mu'tazilite view is that human action occurs by human power alone, without necessity or compulsion. (2) The Jabarite view is that human action occurs by God's power alone, without any human ability or choice, and that humans are akin to inanimate life. (3) Imam al-Ashʿarī's view is that human action occurs by God's power alone, yet the person has ability and choice: when the person directs them toward an act, God [if He had willed it in eternity] creates that act in him. So the act is a creation of God and a *kasb* of the human. (4) The view of many Arab

philosophers (also attributed to Imam al-Juwaynī [d. 478/1085]) is that the cause of human action is human ability alone, by way of necessity and the impossibility of human action not occurring when human ability is directed to it. However, some expert scholars said, "The actual view of the philosophers is that human ability is akin to means and tools/instruments, while that which *gives being* is only the Real (Most Glorious)." This is close to Imam al-Ashʿarī's view; in fact, it seems no different at all. (5) Al-Ustādh Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī's view is that the cause of human action is the combination of two abilities. He does not mean that each by itself is an independent cause, as is mistakenly thought (and which is impossible), but that human ability cannot independently cause action; however, when God's power is conjoined to it, it becomes causative. (6) Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī's view is that the cause of the act itself is divine power, but the cause of its description (or qualification) is human ability, for which they give the analogy of spanking a child in order to cause pain versus in order to discipline: the spank itself emerges only from divine power, but its being qualified as a sin versus as permissible [that is, its moral qualification] is caused by human ability. (*Al-Nibrās*, 177–78)

Also, it would appear that the view of the Māturīdī theologian Shaykh Zādah (d. 951/1544) is comparable to that of al-Isfarāyīnī, since he affirms that human choice and power have a role in human action—not a role of causing existence and creating but only a weak role of being its *apparent* means [which could be termed an intermediary (*wāsiṭah*), connector (*rābiṭah*), completing element (*mutammim*), or the like], similar to clouds for rain or fire for heat and burning (that is, in accordance with Sunni occasionalism)—and that the actual ontology of human action (being created by God, the exalted) is not dependent on its apparent means. See Shaykh Zādah, *Naẓm al-farāʾid*, cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, 208.

Thus, it would seem that the views of al-Isfarāyīnī and Shaykh Zādah are not much dissimilar to the well-known position of the Ashᶜarī and Māturīdī schools, but instead differ mainly in semantics. Indeed, the Ashᶜarī Imam al-Dardīr notes that, with respect to the discourse of some Sunni scholars that might appear to affirm causal efficacy by means of created powers (as some have inferred from, for example, Imam al-Ghazālī or Imam al-Juwaynī), at most what is meant is that the doer who grants existence is only God (so causal efficacy still belongs only to divine power), but that God customarily does so by means of the created power, and that this is categorically distinct from the Mu'tazilite view that the created thing itself grants existence to its effect, yet that it does so by means of its power that was created by God, the exalted. Still, Imam al-Dardīr confirms that the correct, orthodox view is that only divine power has causal efficacy and that God customarily creates effects not *through* their means or secondary causes, but *with* or *at* those means. See al-Muṭīᶜī, *Ḥāshiyah ᶜalā sharḥ al-Dardīr*, 71.

After presenting the Sunni position of the creation-*kasb* dichotomy, Imam al-Taftāzānī states, "An objection is that the universality of God's knowledge and of God's will necessarily entails determinism. For if the two [divine attributes] are conjoined with the occurrence of an act, it must necessarily transpire; if conjoined with its non-occurrence, it cannot possibly transpire. And no free will can coexist with necessity or impossibility. Our response is that what God knows and wills is that the servant shall perform or shall abstain from an act *by the servant's own choice*, so there is no conflict" (*Sharḥ al-ᶜaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 211).

That is, if one were to object that a person's choice and action are fixed because they are decreed by God, the exalted, that objection still does not invalidate human moral responsibility, since the person's genuine experience of his choice as free, such that its corresponding action is voluntary, is sufficient to warrant accountability. Man knows, with an innate and certain knowledge,

the categorical distinction between his voluntary action and his involuntary action (such as a tremor or the like). And God, the exalted, has revealed that divine judgment shall occur only with respect to one's voluntary acts, based on the human perspective of experienced volition, not based on the divine perspective of the eternal decree.

13 He is Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār b. Hāni' al-Baṣrī al-Naẓẓām of the Mu'tazilite theologians. In his youth, he spent much time with dualists and atheists. Noted for his exceptional intellect, he plunged into the sciences of philosophy and emerged with unique views, in which a group of Mu'tazilites followed him; they were called the Naẓẓāmiyyah. He was charged with heresy and even unbelief. He died in the year 231/845. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 1:43.

14 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*,

> Most Mu'tazilites believe [the effects of human volitional acts occur] by the creation of their human agent, with God having no agency therein; they call such effects "[generated or] secondarily caused actions" (*afʿāl mutawallidah*). Al-Naẓẓām held that such effects are in fact the acts of God, the exalted, yet by way of natural causation (of giving existence), meaning that God, the exalted, created every animal upon an innate nature whereby [for example] it must *necessarily* feel pain when it is struck. So according to [al-Naẓẓām], neither God nor the human directly grants existence to the effect [but rather, God endows each species with its particular nature, which is then necessarily bound to the world's nexus of secondary causation]. Al-Qalānisī also held that they are the acts of God, the exalted, yet by way of the necessity of innate nature, meaning each animal is endowed with its nature [and necessarily bound to the world's causal nexus]. This position is close to that of al-Naẓẓām; in fact, it is identical. The upshot of the two positions is that it is inconceivable for a secondary cause to exist without the existence of its effect, and this [opinion] corresponds to

the opinion of the naturalists (*ahl al-ṭabā'iʿ*). (al-Ṣābūnī, *Al-Kifāyah*, 64r. [BT])

He is Abū Maʿn Thumāmah b. Ashras al-Numayrī, eloquent rhetorician and major Mu'tazilite thinker, whose followers are called the Thumā'iyyah, a group noted for various views that no others held. Ibn Ḥazm said that Thumāmah believed the cosmos was God's action, yet by "natural emanation." Among his students was the famous linguist al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869). He died in the year 213/828. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:100.

This issue is related to the broader issue of causation and the relationship between secondary causes and effects. The Sunni position, termed *occasionalism*, holds that all effects in the cosmos are directly created by God, the exalted, while what are perceived as causes are mere loci, or occasions, for divine activity. The basis of Sunni occasionalism is that God's oneness pertains not only to His entity, such that nothing besides Him can be eternal and necessary, but also to His attributes, such that nothing can share with Him in a divine attribute (in this case, divine power to create) and also to His actions, such that nothing besides Him can create (that is, cause to exist). Another basis of this view is that the scope of divine power must be universal, as any limitation thereof would entail that an attribute of God, the exalted, was the object of specification and determination, which would by necessity entail His temporality. But God, the exalted, is eternal. (See appendix A for more detail.)

Hence, only God can grant existence. When fire burns, it is God, the exalted, who creates the fire, creates the burning, and conjoins the two together. In fact, God, the exalted, does not create effects *through* their secondary causes (*bihā*), but rather *with* or *at* them (*ʿindahā*), since the former would entail His "making use of means" and thus resemblance to creation, which is rationally inadmissable since the eternal cannot resemble anything temporal. Therefore, the predication of an effect to its secondary cause

(*ḥukm ʿādī*) is defined by Sunnis as "the affirmation of a connection (*rabṭ*) between two things [such as 'fire' and 'burning'] ... by means of empirical evidence (*takrār*), while also affirming that the two things are fully separable (*infikāk*) and that there exists no actual causal relationship (*ta'thīr*) whatsoever between the two" (al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 250–51). In the words of the Qur'an, God, the exalted, is "creator of all things" (39:62). And a miracle is but the separation of the two customarily conjoined things: when God, the exalted, creates a secondary cause, without creating its usual effect, or vice versa.

However, aside from miracles, God, the exalted, is consistent in the patterns of His creative act, such that He normally creates burning with the touch of fire, cutting with using a blade, satiation with eating food, etc. As discussed above, this principle applies to human action as well: when a person chooses to do an act, God, the exalted, customarily creates that act corresponding to the human choice; man does not create his actions, yet his choices regularly translate into actions. The customary patterns of God's fiat, in man and in the world, are what allow man to function in the world and to engage in science; they are the basis of what are called *laws of nature*. Yet nature is itself not causative. As such, Sunnis consider the view that a thing causes its effects through a divinely endowed potency (*quwwah mūdaʿah*) as heretical (*bidʿah*), though still within the fold of Islam, and they consider the view that a thing causes its effects completely naturally and independent of divine involvement (*bi al-ṭabʿ aw bi al-ʿillah*) as actually outside of Islam (*kufr*).

For these erroneous views, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hāshimī gives the analogy of a pauper going to the door of the king's palace, who, while regularly receiving provision from the door, believes the door to be the giver and thanks it profusely, failing to recognize the king as his true provider. Shaykh al-Hāshimī comments, "As for the scholars of Sunni orthodoxy, God has illuminated their insight such that they are not afflicted by a

single thing of the cosmos, and ultimate realities—as they truly and objectively are—have been unveiled for them. This alone is the unveiling that God, the exalted, bestows to His saints, such that they are saved from the calamities of unbelief and heresy in matters of creed" (al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 126–27).

Thus, misunderstanding secondary causation (*rabṭ ʿādī*) by deeming it inherently necessary was categorized by Sunnis as one of the "foundations of disbelief and heresy," the others being (1) emanation theory (*ījāb dhātī*), which holds that the cosmos emanated from the divine without His choice; (2) hard natural law (*taḥsīn ʿaqlī*), which posits that God's actions and rulings logically depend on motives grounded in accruing benefit and warding off harm, while Sunnis hold that God, the exalted, is bound to no natural law, for He alone posits morality (*taḥsīn sharʿī*) and He is free to act however He chooses; (3) belief based on emulation alone (*taqlīd radī'*), whether based on tribalism, group loyalty, or the like, as opposed to belief based on personal conviction and realization (*taḥqīq*); (4) compounded ignorance (*jahl murakkab*), which is to be ignorant of truth while thinking one is correct; and (5) anthropomorphic reading of scripture, based on a literalist reading of ambiguous verses while neglecting rational proofs, nuances of the Arabic language, and the categorical texts of scripture that affirm divine transcendence above physicality and temporality. See Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-Dardīr, *Sharḥ al-kharīdah al-bahiyyah fī ʿilm al-tawḥīd*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Shannār (Damascus: Dār al-Bayrūtī, 2004), 64–66; al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 120–27; al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 249–53.

Predestination and the Existence of Evil

ON PLACING A BURDEN BEYOND ONE'S CAPACITY

Contrary to the Ashʿarī scholars, our fellow Māturīdīs state that it is not conceivable that God, the exalted, place on His servants a burden that cannot be performed by them. This is because burdening someone incapable falls outside the scope of wisdom, like burdening a blind person to see or a paralyzed person to walk; thus it would not be attributed to the all-wise—may His remembrance be exalted. To further elaborate, *to burden* is to require someone to do that which entails hardship, as a test such that he is rewarded for its performance and punished for its nonperformance; this can be actualized only in something conceivable, not in something inconceivable.

If it is said: God, the exalted, states, "Our Lord, place not upon us a burden we cannot bear" (2:286).[1] So if [an unbearable burden] were not possible, seeking refuge from it would not be valid. Likewise, God, the exalted, says to the angels, "Inform me of the names of these" (2:31), despite His knowing that they had no knowledge of that. Similarly, it is related in a narration that God, the exalted, says on the Day of Arising to those who used to make pictures, "Give life to what you created."[2] We respond The first verse deals with seeking refuge from being given a physical burden that is unbearable, not a moral one; according to us, it is conceivable for God, the exalted, to make someone carry a mountain or wall he cannot bear, such that he dies, but not to place a moral burden on him to carry a mountain or wall such that if he does so, he is rewarded, and if he does not, he is punished, since that would contravene divine wisdom, as we have already mentioned.

القَوْلُ فِي تَكْلِيفِ مَا لَا يُطَاقُ

قَالَ أَصْحَابُنَا رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ لَا يَجُوزُ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى أَن يُكَلِّفَ عِبَادَهُ بِمَا لَا يَصِحُّ وُجُودُهُ مِنْهُمْ ، خِلَافًا لِلْأَشْعَرِيَّةِ . وَذَلِكَ لِأَنَّ تَكْلِيفَ الْعَاجِزِ خَارِجٌ عَنِ الْحِكْمَةِ ، كَتَكْلِيفِ الْأَعْمَى بِالنَّظَرِ وَالْمُقْعَدِ بِالْمَشْيِ ، فَلَا يُنْسَبُ إِلَى الْحَكِيمِ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ . وَتَحْقِيقُهُ أَنَّ التَّكْلِيفَ إِلْزَامُ مَا فِيهِ كُلْفَةٌ لِلْفَاعِلِ ابْتِلَاءً بِحَيْثُ لَوْ فَعَلَ يُثَابُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَوِ امْتَنَعَ يُعَاقَبُ عَلَيْهِ ، وَهَٰذَا إِنَّمَا يَتَحَقَّقُ فِيمَا يُتَصَوَّرُ وُجُودُهُ مِنْهُ لَا فِيمَا يَسْتَحِيلُ عَنْهُ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦ ﴾ ، وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ جَائِزًا لَمَا صَحَّ الْاِسْتِعَاذَةُ عَنْهُ ؛ وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ ﴿ أَنۢبِـُٔونِى بِأَسْمَآءِ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ ﴾ ، مَعَ عِلْمِهِ أَنَّهُ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ ؛ وَكَذَا رُوِيَ فِي الْخَبَرِ « يَقُولُ اللهُ تَعَالَى لِلْمُصَوِّرِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ : أَحْيُوا مَا خَلَقْتُمْ » .

قُلْنَا فِي الْآيَةِ الْأُولَى اسْتِعَاذَةٌ عَنْ تَحْمِيلِ مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَهُ بِهِ ، لَا عَنْ تَكْلِيفِهِ ، وَعِنْدَنَا يَجُوزُ أَن يُحَمِّلَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى جَبَلًا أَوْ جِدَارًا بِحَيْثُ لَا يُطِيقُهُ فَيَمُوتُ ، وَلَا يَجُوزُ أَن يُكَلِّفَهُ أَن يَحْمِلَ جَبَلًا أَوْ جِدَارًا بِحَيْثُ لَوْ فَعَلَ يُثَابُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَوِ امْتَنَعَ يُعَاقَبُ عَلَيْهِ ، لِأَنَّهُ خَارِجٌ عَنِ الْحِكْمَةِ عَلَى مَا ذَكَرْنَا .

And the statement of God, the exalted, "Inform me of the names of these," is not literally placing a burden, but rather an "address of displaying inability" entailed by the command form, so as to make manifest their incapacity, which is conceivable. Likewise, the command to give life to pictures is also not literally placing a burden, but rather a type of punishment for [the one who drew them] for his having committed the enormity; this is proven by the fact that it occurs on [the Day of] Arising, which is the abode of recompense, not the abode of testing.

If it is said: Did He not place upon Abū Jahl[3] [d. 2/624] and Pharaoh the responsibility of faith, while knowing all along that the two would never believe, is it not impossible for something to exist if it contradicts what is known to God, the exalted? We respond: This question first entails divergence from unanimous consensus (*ijmāᶜ*), as well as denial of a statement of God, the exalted. Regarding the former, the community has reached unanimous consensus that God never *actually* places a burden on anyone greater than his ability; the difference of opinion is only in its *logical possibility*. Regarding the second, God, the exalted, states, "God does not burden any soul, except within its capacity" (2:286), and the impossible is not within the capacity of anyone.

And specifically regarding the statement "Is it not impossible for something to exist if it contradicts what is known to God, the exalted?", we respond with the following: "Impossible" is [defined as] that which cannot be logically conceived of [since it entails contradiction], while "possible" is that which can [be logically conceived of, as it entails no contradiction]. The existence or nonexistence of something is considered only in and of itself, independent of God's knowledge and will.

وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ أَنۢبِـُٔونِى بِأَسْمَآءِ هَـٰٓؤُلَآءِ ﴾ لَيْسَ بِتَكْلِيفٍ حَقِيقَةً بَلْ هُوَ خِطَابُ تَعْجِيزٍ وَتَقْصِيرٍ تُوجِبُهُ صِيغَةُ الْأَمْرِ لِإِظْهَارِ عَجْزِهِمْ ، وَإِنَّهُ جَائِزٌ . وَكَذَا الْأَمْرُ بِإِحْيَاءِ الصُّوَرِ لَيْسَ بِتَكْلِيفٍ حَقِيقَةً أَيْضًا ، بَلْ هُوَ نَوْعُ تَعْذِيبٍ لَهُ عَلَى ارْتِكَابِهِ الْمَحْظُورَ ، يُوَضِّحُهُ أَنَّهُ يَكُونُ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ وَهِيَ دَارُ الْجَزَاءِ لَا دَارُ الْاِبْتِلَاءِ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ أَلَيْسَ أَنَّهُ كَلَّفَ أَبَا جَهْلٍ وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّهُمَا لَا يُؤْمِنَانِ ، وَخِلَافُ مَعْلُومِ اللهِ تَعَالَى مُحَالٌ ؟ قُلْنَا أَوَّلُ مَا يَلْزَمُ عَلَى هَذَا السُّؤَالِ مُخَالَفَةُ الْإِجْمَاعِ ثُمَّ تَكْذِيبُ قَوْلِ اللهِ تَعَالَى . أَمَّا مُخَالَفَةُ الْإِجْمَاعِ فَلِأَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ أَجْمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنَّ تَكْلِيفَ مَا لَيْسَ فِي الْوُسْعِ لَيْسَ بِكَائِنٍ أَصْلًا ، وَإِنَّمَا الْاِخْتِلَافُ فِي جَوَازِهِ عَقْلًا . وَأَمَّا تَكْذِيبُ الْآيَةِ فَقَوْلُ اللهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ﴾ ، وَالْمُحَالُ لَيْسَ فِي وُسْعِ أَحَدٍ .

وَقَوْلُهُ خِلَافُ مَعْلُومِ اللهِ تَعَالَى مُحَالٌ ، قُلْنَا الْمُحَالُ مَا لَا يُمْكِنُ فِي الْعَقْلِ تَقْدِيرُ وُجُودِهِ ، وَالْجَائِزُ مَا يُمْكِنُ . وَإِنَّمَا يُقَدَّرُ وُجُودُ الشَّيْءِ وَعَدَمُهُ فِي ذَاتِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ النِّسْبَةِ إِلَى عِلْمِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَإِرَادَتِهِ .

This is indicated by the fact that we are already in agreement that both the existence and the nonexistence of the cosmos are logically possible, while in the knowledge of God, the exalted, it was certainly to come into existence. The reality of its current existence does not render it logically necessary, since if what God knew to exist were deemed necessary and what He knew to not exist were deemed impossible, there would be no actualization of that which could possibly exist. Moreover, divine will would then serve to *distinguish* the necessary from the impossible, rather than *specify* one logical possibility from another. This understanding is contrary to the position of all logicians/metaphysicians.

Now if it said: The notion that it is possible for something to exist if it contradicts what is known to God, the exalted, entails an ascription of ignorance to God, the exalted. We respond: The ascription of ignorance pertains to existence itself, not to its possibility, for in the knowledge of God, the exalted, something will not exist *despite the possibility of its existence*. This entails affirmation of God's [complete and perfect] knowledge, not ascription of ignorance to Him. And enablement is by God alone.

ON THE GENERALITY OF THINGS WILLED

The People of Truth—may God grant them victory—state that every originated thing (*muḥdath*), whether substance or accident, good or evil, occurs by the will, decree (*qaḍā'*), and predestination (*qadar*) of God, the exalted. The Mu'tazilites state that things not pleasing to God, the exalted, are not willed by Him. They differed among themselves, however, regarding permissible things.

We state that whatever God, the exalted, knows will exist, He wills for it to exist, regardless of whether He commands it or not. Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ alluded to this when he asked one of the Qadarites, "Did God, the exalted, eternally know all the evil and vile things that would exist, or not?"

وَدَلَالَةُ ذَلِكَ أَنَّا لتَّفَقْنَا عَلَى أَنَّ الْعَالَمَ جَائِزُ الْوُجُودِ وَالْعَدَمِ مَعَ عِلْمِ اللهِ تَعَالَى أَنَّهُ سَيُوجَدُ ، وَتَحَقُّقُ وُجُودِهِ فِي الْحَالِ لَا يُوجِبُ كَوْنَهُ وَاجِبًا ، إِذْ لَوْ صَارَ مَا عَلِمَ وُجُودَهُ وَاجِبًا وَمَا عَلِمَ أَن لَا يُوجَدَ مُسْتَحِيلًا ، لَمْ يَكُن لِجَائِزِ الْوُجُودِ تَحَقُّقٌ ، وَتَكُونُ الْإِرَادَةُ لِتَمْيِيزِ الْوَاجِبِ مِنَ الْمُحَالِ لَا لِتَخْصِيصِ أَحَدِ الْجَائِزَيْنِ مِنَ الْآخَرِ ، وَإِنَّهُ خِلَافُ قَوْلِ الْعُقَلَاءِ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ جَازَ وُجُودُ خِلَافِ مَعْلُومِ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَكَانَ فِيهِ تَجْهِيلُ اللهِ تَعَالَى . قُلْنَا التَّجْهِيلُ فِي نَفْسِ الْوُجُودِ لَا فِي تَصَوُّرِهِ ، فَإِنَّ عِلْمَ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِيهِ أَن لَا يُوجَدَ مَعَ تَصَوُّرِ وُجُودِهِ ، وذَلِكَ تَحْقِيقُ عِلْمِ اللهِ تَعَالَى لَا تَجْهِيلُهُ . وبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي تَعْمِيمِ الْمُرَادَاتِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ نَصَرَهُمُ اللهُ تَعَالَى كُلُّ مُحْدَثٍ فَهُوَ بِإِرَادَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَقَضَائِهِ وَقَدَرِهِ ، عَيْنًا كَانَ أَوْ عَرَضًا ، خَيْرًا كَانَ أَوْ شَرًّا . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ مَا لَيْسَ بِمَرْضِيِّ اللهِ تَعَالَى فَلَيْسَ بِمُرَادٍ لَهُ ، وَاخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْمُبَاحَاتِ .

فَنَقُولُ مَا عَلِمَ اللهُ تَعَالَى أَن يُوجَدَ أَرَادَ أَن يُوجَدَ ، سَوَاءٌ أَمَرَ بِهِ أَوْ لَمْ يَأْمُرْ . وَإِلَيْهِ أَشَارَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ حَيْثُ سَأَلَ بَعْضَ الْقَدَرِيَّةِ هَلْ عَلِمَ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي الْأَزَلِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنَ الشُّرُورِ وَالْقَبَائِحِ أَمْ لَا ؟

The person was forced to admit [that God knew those things]. He then asked, "Did God will to make manifest that which He knew *as He knew it*, or did He will to make them manifest contrary to what He knew, whereby His knowledge would be rendered ignorance?" The person then renounced his former position and repented to God for it. For that reason, one of our fellow Māturīdīs stated, "Divine will corresponds to divine knowledge" (*al-irādah tajrī maʿa al-ʿilm*). The correct way of stating it, however, is that divine will corresponds to divine action [that is, what occurs] (*al-irādah tajrī maʿa al-fiʿl*), meaning whatever acts God, the exalted, undertakes were indeed willed by Him. For that reason, the shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr [al-Māturīdī] stated that this issue derives from the issue of the creation of human action; once we establish that *all* human actions are created by God, the exalted, it then follows that they are willed by Him [as well], since if He did not will them, He would be coerced into bringing them into existence, which is impossible.

Some verses of the Qur'an express the universal scope of divine will, such as the statement of God, the exalted, "And you do not will unless God wills" (76:30) and His statement "Had God willed, they would not have ascribed partners [to Him]" (6:107) and His statement "Had your Lord willed, all people on earth, without exception, would have believed" (10:99). Some verses, in fact, explicitly affirm that *misguidance* is from the divine will, such as the Exalted's statement "He misguides whomever He wills" (13:27) and His statement "And whomever He chooses to misguide, He makes his chest narrow, in anguish" (6:125). Also, according to Sunni orthodoxy, there is no difference between choice and will; the proof of the soundness of our position is the transmitted saying that the community received with acceptance: "That which God chooses, exists; that which He chooses not, does not exist" (*mā shā' Allāh kān, wa mā lam yasha' lam yakun*).[4]

فَاضْطَرَّ إِلَى الْإِقْرَارِ بِهِ ، ثُمَّ قَالَ هَلْ أَرَادَ اللهُ أَن يُظْهِرَ مَا عَلِمَ كَمَا عَلِمَ أَمْ أَرَادَ أَن يُظْهِرَ بِخِلَافِ مَا عَلِمَ ، فَيَصِيرُ عِلْمُهُ جَهْلًا ؟ فَرَجَعَ عَن مَذْهَبِهِ وَتَابَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ . وَلِهَذَا قَالَ بَعْضُ أَصْحَابِنَا رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ إِنَّ الْإِرَادَةَ تَجْرِي مَعَ الْعِلْمِ . وَالصَّحِيحُ أَن يُقَالَ إِنَّ الْإِرَادَةَ تَجْرِي مَعَ الْفِعْلِ ، وَمَعْنَاهُ أَنَّ كُلَّ مَا كَانَ مَفْعُولَ اللهِ تَعَالَى فَهُوَ مُرَادُهُ . وَلِهَذَا قَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْمَسْأَلَةَ فَرْعُ مَسْأَلَةِ خَلْقِ أَفْعَالِ الْعِبَادِ . فَمَهْمَا دَلَّلْنَا عَلَى أَنَّ جَمِيعَ أَفْعَالِ الْعِبَادِ مَخْلُوقُ اللهِ تَعَالَى كَانَ مُرَادًا لَهُ ، إِذْ لَوْ لَمْ يُرِدْ كَانَ مَجْبُورًا فِي إِيجَادِهِ ، وَإِنَّهُ مُحَالٌ .

وَبَعْضُ آيَاتِ الْقُرْآنِ نَاطِقَةٌ بِعُمُومِ الْمَشِيئَةِ كَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُۚ ﴾ وَقَوْلِهِ ﴿ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَآ أَشۡرَكُواْۗ ﴾ وَقَوْلِهِ ﴿ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَأٓمَنَ مَن فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ كُلُّهُمۡ جَمِيعًاۚ ﴾ . وَبَعْضُهَا يَنُصُّ عَلَى إِرَادَةِ الضَّلَالِ كَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ ﴾ وَكَقَوْلِهِ ﴿ وَمَن يُرِدۡ أَن يُضِلَّهُۥ يَجۡعَلۡ صَدۡرَهُۥ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا ﴾ . وَلَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَ الْمَشِيئَةِ وَالْإِرَادَةِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ . وَالدَّلِيلُ عَلَى صِحَّةِ مَا قُلْنَا اللَّفْظُ الْمَنْقُولُ الَّذِي تَلَقَّتْهُ الْأُمَّةُ بِالْقَبُولِ « مَا شَاءَ اللهُ كَانَ وَمَا لَمْ يَشَأْ لَمْ يَكُنْ » .

The position of our opponent contradicts the implication of this statement, since some of what God chooses [which they interpret as *want* or *preference*], such as the faith of all disbelievers, did not occur, and some of what He did not choose, such as their disbelief, occurred. Hence, their position [that *mashī'ah* means *want* or *preference* and thus differs from *choice* or *will*] is invalid by unanimous consensus of the community.

If it is said: If God chose disbelief for the disbeliever, the person would not be able to do other than God's will, which would render him coerced. He should then either be excused for his disbelief, which would nullify the divine command, prohibition, promise, and threat, or he should be punished for it, which entails accountability for what exceeds capacity, as well as the ascription of injustice to God, the exalted. We respond: We rebut your argument with the issue of knowledge, in that if God knows he will disbelieve, is he then able to do other than what God knows, or not? Your response with regard to the issue of knowledge is our response to the issue of will. Furthermore, our position is that, although God wills disbelief for him, what God wills is that the person chooses disbelief out of his own volition and choice while having the ability to believe; this is also what God knows of the person. Thus, the divine command, prohibition, promise, and threat are valid. So if what is willed and known is an act based on choice, how can the doer be deemed coerced? In fact, God, the exalted, explicitly mentions the servant's own volition in His statement "So whoever wants, let him believe; whoever wants, let him disbelieve" (18:29) as well as in His statement "Do as you wish" (41:40). Indeed, the servant necessarily knows that of himself; there is no way for him to deny it. And God's will of the servant's actions is established by both scripture and reason. So he cannot deny either of the two [wills].[5]

وَمَذْهَبُ الْخَصْمِ يُضَادُّ قَضِيَّةَ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةِ ، فَإِنَّ مَا شَاءَ اللهُ مِنْ إِيمَانِ جَمِيعِ الْكَفَرَةِ لَمْ يَكُن ، وَمَا لَمْ يَشَأْ مِنْ كُفْرِهِمْ كَانَ ، فَيَكُونُ بَاطِلًا بِإِجْمَاعِ الْأُمَّةِ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ لَوْ شَاءَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِ الْكُفْرَ لَمْ يُمْكِنْهُ الْخُرُوجُ عَن مَشِيئَتِهِ ، فَيَكُونُ مَجْبُورًا ، فَإِمَّا أَن يُعْذَرَ فِي الْكُفْرِ ، وَفِيهِ إِبْطَالُ الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ وَالْوَعْدِ وَالْوَعِيدِ ، أَوْ يُعَاقَبَ عَلَيْهِ ، وَفِيهِ تَكْلِيفُ مَا لَيْسَ فِي الْوُسْعِ وَنِسْبَةُ الْجَوْرِ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى . قُلْنَا نُعَارِضُكُمْ بِالْعِلْمِ أَنَّهُ مَتَى عَلِمَ مِنْهُ الْكُفْرَ هَلْ يُمْكِنُهُ الْخُرُوجُ عَنْ عِلْمِهِ أَمْ لَا ؟ فَمَا أَجَبْتُمْ عَنْ فَصْلِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ جَوَابُنَا عَنْ فَصْلِ الْإِرَادَةِ . ثُمَّ نَقُولُ شَاءَ مِنْهُ الْكُفْرَ وَلَكِن بِاخْتِيَارِهِ وَمَشِيئَتِهِ مَعَ الْقُدْرَةِ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ ، كَمَا عَلِمَ مِنْهُ كَذَلِكَ ، حَتَّى صَحَّ مِنْهُ الْأَمْرُ وَالنَّهْيُ وَالْوَعْدُ وَالْوَعِيدُ ، فَإِذَا كَانَ الْمُرَادُ وَالْمَعْلُومُ الْفِعْلَ الْاِخْتِيَارِيَّ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ الْفَاعِلُ فِيهِ مَجْبُورًا . وَقَدْ نَصَّ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى مَشِيئَةِ الْعَبْدِ بِقَوْلِهِ ﴿ فَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ ﴾ ، وَكَذَا فِي قَوْلِهِ ﴿ ٱعْمَلُواْ مَا شِئْتُمْ ﴾ . وَالْعَبْدُ يَعْلَمُ ذَلِكَ مِن نَفْسِهِ عِلْمًا ضَرُورِيًّا لَا يَجِدُ إِلَى إِنْكَارِهِ سَبِيلًا ، وَمَشِيئَةُ اللهِ تَعَالَى لِأَفْعَالِهِ ثَابِتَةٌ نَصًّا وَعَقْلًا ، فَلَا سَبِيلَ إِلَى إِنْكَارِ أَحَدِهِمَا .

If it is said: God, the exalted, states, "And I have not created jinn and mankind except so as to worship Me" (51:56), He informs us that He created them for worship, so how can He will their disbelief and disobedience? He likewise states, "God wants ease for you; He does not want difficulty for you" (2:185) and "God does not will oppression for [His] servants" (40:31). We respond: As for the first verse, it cannot be applied generally, since children and the insane do not worship Him; therefore, it must be interpreted appropriately. There are two possible interpretations: (1) it could mean "except so as to be servants of Mine" or (2) it could mean "[I have not created] whomever among jinn and mankind that God, the exalted, knows will worship Him [except so as to worship Me]." Thus generality is not intended, and God knows best. As for the second verse, what is meant is that, specifically with respect to the legislation of not fasting in Ramadan and making it up outside of Ramadan, He does not want difficulty for His servants, but rather ease. As for the third verse, what is meant is He does not will oppression for His servants (that is, He does not oppress them), but not that He does not will for some of them to oppress others. This is indicated by the fact that He does not state "oppression *of* servants," but rather "oppression *for* servants." The preposition "for" [here] means "against," as in His statement "And if you do evil, then [you do it] for yourselves" (17:7)—that is, "then [you do it] against yourselves." And God is the One who guides.

فَإِنْ قِيلَ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾ ، أَخْبَرَ أَنَّهُ خَلَقَهُمْ لِلْعِبَادَةِ فَكَيْفَ يُرِيدُ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْمَعْصِيَةَ ؟ وَكَذَا قَالَ ﴿ يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُمُ ٱلْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ ٱلْعُسْرَ ﴾ ، وَكَذَا قَالَ ﴿ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴾ . قُلْنَا أَمَّا الْآيَةُ الْأُولَى فَتَعَذَّرَ إِجْرَاؤُهَا عَلَى عُمُومِهَا ، فَإِنَّ الصِّبْيَانَ وَالْمَجَانِينَ لَمْ يَعْبُدُوهُ ، فَلَا بُدَّ مِنَ التَّأْوِيلِ . وَالتَّأْوِيلُ مِن وَجْهَيْنِ : أَحَدُهُمَا يَجُوزُ أَن يَكُونَ الْمُرَادُ (إِلَّا لِيَكُونُوا عَبِيدًا لِي) ، وَالثَّانِي يَجُوزُ أَن يَكُونَ الْمُرَادُ (مَنْ عَلِمَ اللهُ تَعَالَى مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَن يَعْبُدُوهُ) لَا الْعُمُومَ ، وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ . وَأَمَّا الْآيَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ فَالْمُرَادُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يُرِدْ بِشَرْعِ الْإِفْطَارِ فِي رَمَضَانَ وَالْقَضَاءِ خَارِجَ رَمَضَانَ الْعُسْرَ بِعِبَادِهِ ، وَإِنَّمَا أَرَادَ بِهِ الْيُسْرَ . وَأَمَّا الْآيَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ فَالْمُرَادُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُرِيدُ الظُّلْمَ لِعِبَادِهِ ، يَعْنِي لَا يَظْلِمُ عَلَيْهِمْ ، لَا أَن لَا يُرِيدَ ظُلْمَ الْعِبَادِ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ . يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَقُلْ (ظُلْمَ الْعِبَادِ) بَلْ قَالَ (ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ) ، وَاللَّامُ بِمَعْنَى عَلَى ، كَقَوْلِهِ ﴿ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا ﴾ أَيْ فَعَلَيْهَا . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي .

ON THE NONEXISTENT

To proceed: according to most of our fellow Māturīdīs, yet in opposition to some people, the nonexistent (*maʿdūm*) is not [efficiently] associated with the will of God, since will is concomitant with action [or performance], and that which does not exist cannot be described as "performed" and thus was not actually "willed." [Although for any nonexistent that is in and of itself metaphysically possible, it is *sufficiently* associated with God's will, meaning He could have decided to create it; had He done so, it would exist.] Moreover, that which is [efficiently] associated with will is temporal (*ḥādith*), while the nonexistent is without beginning (*azalī*), as indicated by the [well-known] saying of the community "That which God wills exists, and that which He wills not does not exist" (*mā shā' Allāh kān, wa mā lam yasha' lam yakun*). They do not say instead, "That which God *wills to not exist* does not exist" (*mā shā' Allāh an lā yakūn lam yakun*).[6]

Likewise, according to all Muslims, yet in opposition to the Sālimiyyah and Muqannaʿiyyah, the nonexistent is not associated with sight. They claim that the universe was seen by God before its existence, in eternity; this is absurd, as it suggests that the nonexistent is a "thing." The basis of this view returns to the issue of the eternality of the universe. Also, they are in agreement that the nonexistent that cannot possibly exist, as well as the nonexistent that can possibly exist yet according to God's knowledge shall never exist, are not associated with the sight of God, the exalted; the same ruling, then, must apply to the nonexistent [that can and shall exist] before its existence, for there is no disparity in [the] "nonexistence" [of these two nonexistents]. Finally, the determining factor of the possibility of "being seen" in the physical realm is actual extra-mental existence, as we established previously in the discussion regarding the vision of God; so if that determining factor is not present, the possibility of being seen is also absent, thereby resulting in impossibility.

فَصْلٌ

ثُمَّ الْمَعْدُومُ لَا يَتَعَلَّقُ بِإِرَادَةِ اللهِ عِنْدَ عَامَّةِ أَصْحَابِنَا رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ خِلَافًا لِبَعْضِ النَّاسِ ، فَإِنَّ الْإِرَادَةَ تُلَازِمُ الْفِعْلَ ، وَالْمَعْدُومُ لَا يَصْلُحُ أَن يَكُونَ مَفْعُولًا فَلَا يَصْلُحُ أَن يَكُونَ مُرَادًا ؛ وَلِأَنَّ مَا تَعَلَّقَ بِالْإِرَادَةِ يَكُونُ حَادِثًا ، وَالْمَعْدُومُ أَزَلِيٌّ . يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُ الْأُمَّةِ « مَا شَاءَ اللهُ كَانَ وَمَا لَمْ يَشَأْ لَمْ يَكُنْ » ، وَلَمْ يَقُولُوا مَا شَاءَ اللهُ أَن لَا يَكُونَ لَمْ يَكُنْ .

وَكَذَا الْمَعْدُومُ لَا يَتَعَلَّقُ بِالرُّؤْيَةِ عِنْدَ جَمِيعِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ خِلَافًا لِلسَّالِمِيَّةِ وَالْمُقْتَعِيَّةِ ، فَإِنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ الْعَالَمَ مَرْئِيُّ اللهِ تَعَالَى قَبْلَ وُجُودِهِ فِي الْأَزَلِ ، وَهُوَ قَوْلٌ بَاطِلٌ فَإِنَّهُ يُشْعِرُ بِكَوْنِ الْمَعْدُومِ شَيْئًا ، وَحَاصِلُهُ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى الْقَوْلِ بِقِدَمِ الْعَالَمِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّهُمُ اتَّفَقُوا أَنَّ الْمَعْدُومَ الَّذِي يَسْتَحِيلُ وُجُودُهُ وَالَّذِي يَجُوزُ وُجُودُهُ وَلَكِنْ عَلِمَ اللهُ تَعَالَى أَنَّهُ لَا يُوجَدُ أَصْلًا لَا يَتَعَلَّقُ بِرُؤْيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، فَكَذَا الْمَعْدُومُ الَّذِي يُوجَدُ ، إِذْ لَا تَفَاوُتَ فِي الْعَدَمِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ عِلَّةَ جَوَازِ الرُّؤْيَةِ الْوُجُودُ فِي الشَّاهِدِ ، عَلَى مَا قَرَّرْنَا فِي مَسْأَلَةِ الرُّؤْيَةِ ، فَإِذَا انْعَدَمَتِ الْعِلَّةُ امْتَنَعَ جَوَازُ الرُّؤْيَةِ فَجَاءَتِ الْاِسْتِحَالَةُ ،

And that which cannot possibly be seen is not ascribed even to the sight of God, the exalted, such as the coexistence of mutually exclusive opposites—because it is impossible in the physical realm [and conceptually, since it entails contradiction], it is not ascribed even to the power of God, the exalted. And God is the One who guides.

ON DENIAL OF INCUMBENCY UPON GOD TO DO WHAT IS BEST [FOR PEOPLE]

The People of Truth state that it is not incumbent on God, the exalted, to do what is best for His servants, nor [even] what is good for them; this is contrary to the position of the Muʿtazilites. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and his followers state that He must do what is good [for them].[7]

This is an incorrect view, for divinity contradicts being subject to incumbency; rather, He may do with His servants whatever He desires. However, He has chosen to single out believers with a special grace that, were He to confer it to all disbelievers, they too would have believed; that is from His pure bounty and generosity. And, if He denies some of His servants that grace, it is from His justice and supreme dominance, and He is praised in His justice and dominance, just as He is praised in His bounty and generosity. Moreover, the position that it is incumbent upon God, the exalted, to do what is best negates the blessing of guidance for His servants, since one who fulfills an obligation to another has not favored him with a blessing. Also, this position limits the ability of God, the exalted, in that it assumes that He gives what is best for the servant, since were He able to give anything better than that to the servant yet refrained from doing so, that would [according to them] be unjust on His part.

وَمَا يَسْتَحِيلُ رُؤْيَتُهُ لَا يُضَافُ إِلَى رُؤْيَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، كَالْجَمْعِ بَيْنَ الضِّدَّيْنِ لَمَّا كَانَ مُسْتَحِيلًا فِي الشَّاهِدِ لَا يُضَافُ إِلَى قُدْرَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى . وَاللهُ الْهَادِي.

القَوْلُ فِي نَفْيِ وُجُوبِ الْأَصْلَحِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ لَا يَجِبُ عَلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى رِعَايَةُ الْأَصْلَحِ لِعِبَادِهِ وَلَا رِعَايَةُ الصَّلَاحِ لَهُمْ ، خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ . وَقَالَ بِشْرُ بْنُ الْمُعْتَمِرِ وَمَنْ تَابَعَهُ يَجِبُ رِعَايَةُ الصَّلَاحِ .

وَهُوَ قَوْلٌ فَاسِدٌ ، لِأَنَّ الْأُلُوهِيَّةَ تُنَافِي الْوُجُوبَ عَلَيْهِ ، بَل لَهُ أَن يَفْعَلَ بِعَبِيدِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ ، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ خَصَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِلُطْفٍ لَوْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ مَعَ جَمِيعِ الْكُفَّارِ لَآمَنُوا ، وَذَلِكَ فَضْلٌ مِنْهُ وَكَرَمٌ . وَلَوْ مَنَعَ ذَلِكَ عَن بَعْضِ عَبِيدِهِ كَانَ عَدْلًا مِنْهُ وَقَهْرًا ، وَهُوَ مَحْمُودٌ فِي عَدْلِهِ وَقَهْرِهِ كَمَا فِي فَضْلِهِ وَكَرَمِهِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ فِي الْقَوْلِ بِوُجُوبِ الْأَصْلَحِ عَلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى إِبْطَالَ مِنَّتِهِ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ فِي الْهِدَايَةِ لَهُمْ ، لِأَنَّ مَنْ أَدَّى حَقًّا وَاجِبًا عَلَيْهِ لَا مِنَّةَ لَهُ عَلَى الْمُؤَدَّى إِلَيْهِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ فِيهِ قَوْلًا بِتَنَاهِي مَقْدُورِ اللهِ تَعَالَى حَيْثُ أَعْطَاهُ مَا هُوَ الْأَصْلَحُ لَهُ ، إِذْ لَوْ بَقِيَ فِي مَقْدُورِهِ شَيْءٌ هُوَ أَصْلَحُ لِلْعَبْدِ وَلَمْ يُعْطِهِ إِيَّاهُ كَانَ جَوْرًا مِنْهُ .

One consequence of this is it implies that God, the exalted, gave no more bounty to Muḥammad ﷺ than He gave to Abū Jahl, since it argues that He bestowed upon each of the two the utmost of His ability to do what is best. In addition, the community has reached consensus about asking God, the exalted, for protection (*ʿiṣmah*), help (*maʿūnah*), and enablement to obey (*tawfīq*).[8] If He were to give that to them anyway, without their supplication, then their supplicating for them would be pointless; were He not to, then He would have done something bad for them. Likewise, asking for protection from disease and for removal of harm is permissible, in fact recommended. If disease and tribulation were good for them, then asking for their removal would entail requesting harm; if their removal were beneficial, then He would have done something bad for them [in allowing the disease and tribulation in the first place].

Finally, the following plainly shows that their position is defective: According to them, when God, the exalted, gives the disbeliever the utmost of His ability in [human] readiness and preparation [to believe], but despite that the person does not believe, it becomes clear then that it was not within His ability to do what is best for that servant. For indeed, that would be for the person to believe by his own free will and attain unto everlasting felicity, not merely to be able to believe yet reject faith and be miserable for eternity. Therefore, according to their position, God, the exalted, did for His servant what is worst for him, not what is best for him. And God alone is the One who enables and the One who guides.[9]

وَيَلْزَمُ مِنْ هَذَا أَن لَا يَكُونَ لِلهِ تَعَالَى زِيَادَةُ مِنَّةٍ فِي حَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمْ يَكُنْ ذَلِكَ فِي حَقِّ أَبِي جَهْلٍ ، لِأَنَّهُ يَقُولُ فَعَلَ بِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا غَايَةَ مَا فِي مَقْدُورِهِ مِنَ الْأَصْلَحِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ أَجْمَعَتْ عَلَى سُؤَالِ الْعِصْمَةِ وَالْمَعُونَةِ وَالتَّوْفِيقِ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، فَإِنْ آتَاهُمْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُؤَالٍ فَسُؤَالُهُمْ سَفَهٌ ، وَإِن لَمْ يُؤْتِهِمْ فَقَدْ فَعَلَ بِهِمُ الْمَفْسَدَةَ . وَكَذَا سُؤَالُ دَفْعِ الْمَرَضِ وَكَشْفِ الضُّرِّ جَائِزٌ بَلْ مُسْتَحَبٌّ ، فَإِنْ كَانَ الْمَرَضُ وَالْبَلَاءُ مَصْلَحَةً فَسُؤَالُ إِزَالَتِهِمَا طَلَبُ الْمَفْسَدَةِ ، وَإِنْ كَانَ الزَّوَالُ مَصْلَحَةً فَقَدْ فَعَلَ بِهِمُ الْمَفْسَدَةَ .

وَالَّذِي يُظْهِرُ عَوَارَ مَذْهَبِهِمْ أَنَّ عِنْدَهُمْ لَمَّا أَعْطَى اللهُ تَعَالَى الْكَافِرَ غَايَةَ مَا فِي مَقْدُورِهِ مِنَ الِاسْتِعْدَادِ وَالتَّمَكُّنِ وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ ، تَبَيَّنَ بِهَذَا أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ فِي مَقْدُورِهِ مَا هُوَ الْأَصْلَحُ لِلْعَبْدِ ، لِأَنَّ الْأَصْلَحَ لِلْعَبْدِ أَن يُؤْمِنَ بِاخْتِيَارِهِ فَيَسْعَدَ ، لَا أَن يَقْدِرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنَ فَيَشْقَى . فَإِذَنْ عَلَى زَعْمِهِمْ ، فَعَلَ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِعَبْدِهِ مَا هُوَ الْأَفْسَدُ فِي حَقِّهِ لَا مَا هُوَ الْأَصْلَحُ .

وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ وَالْهَادِي .

ON PROVISIONS

Sunni orthodoxy maintains that whatever a person consumes, whether lawful or illicit, is his provision [that is, what God has provided for him to eat or use]. The Mu'tazilites state that the illicit is not one's provision. This difference of opinion is based on the fact that according to us, the term *provision* applies to whatever a living creature consumes [all of which is granted by God], while according to them, it refers only to what one owns. This is incorrect, for it implies God's breaking His promise of granting provision, as He, the exalted, states, "And there is no animal on earth whatsoever except that its provision is [a guaranteed promise, as if it were incumbent] upon God" (11:6), and animals cannot conceivably "own." Moreover, a person might consume the illicit his entire life, yet it would not be correct to say, "He did not eat provision from God."

If it is said: If the illicit is from God's provision, then why is one punished for its consumption? We respond: Because of [the servant] taking the means, intention, and choice in the matter; indeed, God, the exalted, guarantees provision without qualification yet commands the servant to seek it out in a lawful manner, as He, the exalted, states, "Eat from the earth the lawful and pure" (2:168). So if he seeks it out based on his passion and folly, without it being lawful, God will provide it to him in that matter yet will punish him for his evil intention and disobedience. This is similar to our position on causation (*mutawallidāt*) in general—death in a homicide victim occurs by God's act of creating, yet the murderer is punished for taking the means and intending it. And enablement is from God alone.

القَوْلُ فِي الْأَرْزَاقِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ مَا يَأْكُلُهُ الْإِنْسَانُ فَهُوَ رِزْقُهُ حَلَالًا كَانَ أَوْ حَرَامًا . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْحَرَامُ لَيْسَ بِرِزْقٍ . وَهَذَا الِاخْتِلَافُ بِنَاءً عَلَى أَنَّ اسْمَ الرِّزْقِ عِنْدَنَا يَنْطَلِقُ عَلَى مَا يَتَغَذَّى بِهِ الْحَيُّ ، وَعِنْدَهُمْ عَلَى الْمِلْكِ خَاصَّةً . وَهُوَ فَاسِدٌ ، لِأَنَّهُ يُؤَدِّي إِلَى الْخُلْفِ فِي وَعْدِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِي إِيفَاءِ الرِّزْقِ ، بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱللَّهِ رِزۡقُهَا ﴾ ، وَالدَّوَابُّ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ لَهَا الْمِلْكُ . وَرُبَّمَا يَأْكُلُ الْإِنْسَانُ فِي عُمْرِهِ الْحَرَامَ وَلَيْسَ يَصِحُّ أَن يُقَالَ إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَأْكُلْ رِزْقَ اللهِ تَعَالَى .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ إِذَا كَانَ الْحَرَامُ رِزْقَ اللهِ تَعَالَى فَلِمَ يُعَاقَبُ عَلَى أَكْلِهِ ؟ قُلْنَا بِنَاءً عَلَى مُبَاشَرَةِ سَبَبِهِ وَقَصْدِهِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ ذَلِكَ ، فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَعَالَى وَعَدَ الرِّزْقَ مُطْلَقًا وَأَمَرَ الْعَبْدَ بِطَلَبِهِ مِن وَجْهِ حِلِّهِ بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ كُلُواْ مِمَّا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ حَلَٰلٗا طَيِّبٗا ﴾ ، فَإِذَا طَلَبَهُ بِحِرْصِهِ وَهَوَاهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ حِلِّهِ يُوصِلُهُ اللهُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْوَجْهِ ، وَلَكِن يُعَاقِبُهُ عَلَى سُوءِ اخْتِيَارِهِ وَمُخَالَفَةِ أَمْرِهِ ، كَمَا قُلْنَا فِي الْمُتَوَلِّدَاتِ : إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ فِي الْمَقْتُولِ بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَلَكِن يُعَاقَبُ الْقَاتِلُ عَلَى مُبَاشَرَةِ سَبَبِهِ وَقَصْدِهِ ذَلِكَ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

ON LIFESPANS

Sunni orthodoxy maintains that the victim of murder dies at the end of his appointed lifespan, of which he has no other. Murder is an act of the killer that is ascribed to him, while death is an attribute of the victim that God, the exalted, creates in him immediately after the act of the murderer. The Mu'tazilites state that the victim had his lifespan cut short; were it not for the murder, he would have completed his appointed lifespan. Al-Kaʿbī[10] [d. 319/931] stated that the victim had two lifespans—that of being murdered, and that of normal death—so according to him, the victim of murder is not dead [by his normal lifespan]. The correct position is ours, since God, the exalted, decreed the lifespans of servants, based on His knowledge and will; there is no wavering in divine knowledge and will [both of which are absolute and fixed], and there is no overruling of His decision (*ḥukm*) and His decree (*qaḍā'*).

If it is said: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Maintaining kinship ties increases one's lifespan,"[11] but if a person has only one appointed lifespan, an increase in it would be impossible. We respond: The explanation of this "increase" is that in God's [eternal] knowledge, the individual would have lived [for example] fifty years had he not maintained kinship ties, yet God knew that he would maintain those ties, and as such, his life would be seventy years. What is decreed and willed, then, is that the person will maintain ties and live until seventy; so the difference of twenty is termed "increase due to maintaining ties," based on divine knowledge that, were it not for that [filial piety], he would live only to fifty.

الْقَوْلُ فِي الْآجَالِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ الْمَقْتُولُ مَيِّتٌ بِأَجَلِهِ ، لَا أَجَلَ لَهُ سِوَى ذَلِكَ . وَالْقَتْلُ فِعْلُ الْقَاتِلِ قَائِمٌ بِهِ ، وَالْمَوْتُ قَائِمٌ بِالْمَيِّتِ بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِيهِ عَقِيبَ فِعْلِ الْقَاتِلِ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْمَقْتُولُ مَقْطُوعٌ عَلَيْهِ أَجَلُهُ ، لَوْلَا الْقَتْلُ لَعَاشَ إِلَى أَجَلِهِ . وَقَالَ الْكَعْبِيُّ لَهُ أَجَلَانِ : الْقَتْلُ أَوِ الْمَوْتُ ، وَعِنْدَهُ الْمَقْتُولُ لَيْسَ بِمَيِّتٍ . وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا قُلْنَا ، لِأَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى حَكَمَ بِآجَالِ الْعِبَادِ عَلَى مَا عَلِمَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَرَادَ ، وَلَا تَرَدُّدَ فِي عِلْمِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَإِرَادَتِهِ ، وَلَا مَرَدَّ لِحُكْمِهِ وَقَضَائِهِ .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ « صِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ تَزِيدُ فِي الْعُمْرِ » ، وَلَوْ كَانَ لَهُ أَجَلٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ فِيهِ الزِّيَادَةُ . قُلْنَا تَفْسِيرُ هَذِهِ الزِّيَادَةِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ فِي عِلْمِ اللهِ تَعَالَى أَنَّهُ لَوْلَا صِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ لَكَانَ عُمْرُهُ مَثَلًا خَمْسِينَ سَنَةً ، وَلَكِنْ عَلِمَ أَنَّهُ يَصِلُ رَحِمَهُ وَيَكُونُ عُمْرُهُ سَبْعِينَ سَنَةً ، فَالْمَحْكُومُ وَالْمُرَادُ أَنَّهُ يَصِلُ وَيَعِيشُ إِلَى السَّبْعِينَ سَنَةً ، فَسُمِّيَ هَذَا الْعِشْرُونَ زِيَادَةً بِصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ بِنَاءً عَلَى عِلْمِهِ أَنَّهُ لَوْلَاهُ لَكَانَ عُمْرُهُ خَمْسِينَ سَنَةً .

The basis of this issue is that just as God, the exalted, knows, regarding nonexistent things that will come to exist, how they will exist, He also knows, regarding nonexistent things that will not come to exist, how they would have existed had they come into existence. For example, He informs us regarding the denizens of the fire that, were they brought back to this life, they would have returned to disbelief, although He knows they will not be brought back [to this life], as He, the exalted, states, "And were they brought back, they would have returned to that from which they were prohibited; surely they are liars" (6:28). And enablement is by God alone.

ON PREDESTINATION AND THE DIVINE DECREE

The People of Truth state that all actions, states, and words of creation—without exception—are based on God's eternal decree and predestination. The Mu'tazilites state that acts of disobedience are not by His decree or predestination, just as they claim regarding divine will. This issue is based on the issue of the creation of actions. We maintain that everything that is created and willed by God, the exalted, is thus based on His decree and predestination, since linguistically, *decree* (*qaḍā'*) is a term [in Arabic] used to express action along with perfection, as [the poet] Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī[12] [d. 27/648] said:

> *And upon them were two woven garments, perfectly made (qaḍāhumā)*
> *By David, or [by] the manufacturer of armor, Tubba'*

That is, he wove them and perfected their weaving.

وَأَصْلُ هَذَا أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى كَمَا يَعْلَمُ الْمَعْدُومَ الَّذِي يُوجَدُ أَنَّهُ كَيْفَ يُوجَدُ ، يَعْلَمُ الْمَعْدُومَ الَّذِي لَا يُوجَدُ أَنَّهُ لَوْ وُجِدَ كَيْفَ يُوجَدُ ، كَمَا أَخْبَرَ عَنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ أَنَّهُمْ لَوْ رُدُّوا إِلَى الدُّنْيَا لَعَادُوا إِلَى كُفْرِهِمْ مَعَ عِلْمِهِ أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُرَدُّونَ ، بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَلَوْ رُدُّواْ لَعَادُواْ لِمَا نُهُواْ عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَٰذِبُونَ ﴾ .

وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

القَوْلُ فِي الْقَضَاءِ وَالْقَدَرِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَقِّ أَفْعَالُ الْخَلْقِ وَأَحْوَالُهُمْ وَأَقْوَالُهُمْ كُلُّهَا بِقَضَاءِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَقَدَرِهِ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْمَعَاصِي لَيْسَتْ بِقَضَائِهِ وَقَدَرِهِ ، كَمَا قَالُوا فِي الْإِرَادَةِ ، وَهِيَ مَبْنِيَّةٌ عَلَى مَسْأَلَةِ خَلْقِ الْأَفْعَالِ . فَنَقُولُ كُلُّ مَا كَانَ بِخَلْقِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَإِرَادَتِهِ فَهُوَ بِقَضَائِهِ وَقَدَرِهِ ،لِأَنَّ الْقَضَاءَ فِي اللُّغَةِ عِبَارَةٌ عَنِ الْفِعْلِ مَعَ زِيَادَةِ إِحْكَامٍ ، كَمَا قَالَ أَبُو ذُؤَيْبٍ الْهُذَلِيُّ :

وَعَلَيْهِمَا مَسْرُودَتَانِ قَضَاهُمَا ... دَاوُدُ أَوْ صَنَعُ السَّوَابِغِ تُبَّعُ

أَيْ صَنَعَهُمَا وَأَحْكَمَ صَنْعَتَهُمَا .

Predestination (*qadar*)[13] is to specify every created thing with its particular qualities—such as good (*ḥusn*, lit. beauty) and evil (*qubḥ*, lit. ugliness), benefit and harm, its position in space and time, and what is necessarily bound to it of reward or punishment [based on the person's moral decisions and acts]—as God, the exalted, states, "Verily, We create everything with a predetermined measure" (54:49). The Prophet ﷺ said, "Destiny, its good and its evil, is from God, the exalted."[14]

If it is said: The Prophet ﷺ informed us that God, the exalted, says, "If one is not content with My decree, is not patient with My trials, and does not show gratitude for My blessings, then let him find a lord besides Me."[15] So if disbelief occurred by His decree, we would be obliged to be pleased with it; that [being content with disbelief], of course, is not permissible. We would respond: Disbelief is *what is decreed* by God (*maqḍī Allāh*), not *His decree* (*qaḍā'uhu*). The decree is His attribute, while disbelief is the servant's attribute. His decree is His creating disbelief—which is evil, despicable, and utter falsehood—in the disbeliever, based on the servant's choosing it in a manner by which he deserves perpetual torment [given that his intention was perpetual, that is, for as long as he was granted life, he would choose to remain a disbeliever]. We are content with that [decree—that is, God's *act of creating* what the servant himself chooses]. Not to mention, the Prophet's statement refers to diseases and tribulations that afflict the human being without his choice. As for what the servant undertakes by his own choice, he is most pleased with that and needs no encouragement at all, so that cannot be what the hadith is referring to. And God alone is the One who enables and the One who guides.

وَالْقَدَرُ تَحْدِيدُ كُلِّ مَخْلُوقٍ بِحَدِّهِ الَّذِي يُوجَدُ ، مِنْ حُسْنٍ وَقُبْحٍ ، وَنَفْعٍ وَضُرٍّ، وَمَا يَحْوِيهِ مِنْ ظَرْفِ الْمَكَانِ وَالزَّمَانِ ، وَمَا يَلْزَمُهُ مِنْ ثَوَابٍ أَوْ عِقَابٍ ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلَقْنَٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴾ ، وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « وَالْقَدَرُ خَيْرُهُ وَشَرُّهُ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى » .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ خَبَرًا عَنِ اللهِ تَعَالَى « مَن لَمْ يَرْضَ بِقَضَائِي وَلَمْ يَصْبِرْ عَلَى بَلَائِي وَلَمْ يَشْكُرْ لِنَعْمَائِي فَلْيَطْلُبْ رَبًّا سِوَائِي » ، فَلَوْ كَانَ الْكُفْرُ بِقَضَائِهِ لَزِمَنَا أَن نَرْضَى بِهِ ، وَذَلِكَ لَا يَجُوزُ . قُلْنَا الْكُفْرُ مَقْضِيُّ اللهِ لَا قَضَاؤُهُ ، فَإِنَّ قَضَاءَهُ صِفَتُهُ وَالْكُفْرَ صِفَةُ الْعَبْدِ ، وَقَضَاؤُهُ أَن يَخْلُقَ الْكُفْرَ فِي الْكَافِرِ شَرًّا قَبِيحًا بَاطِلًا عِنْدَ اخْتِيَارِ الْعَبْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى وَجْهٍ يَسْتَحِقُّ بِهِ عِقَابَ الْأَبَدِ ، وَنَحْنُ نَرْضَى بِهَذَا ؛ عَلَى أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ مِنَ الْحَدِيثِ الْأَمْرَاضُ وَالْمَصَائِبُ الَّتِي تُصِيبُ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ غَيْرِ اخْتِيَارِهِ ، فَأَمَّا مَا يُبَاشِرُهُ الْعَبْدُ بِاخْتِيَارِهِ فَهُوَ يَرْضَى بِهِ أَشَدَّ الرِّضَا مِنْ غَيْرِ تَحْرِيضٍ ، فَلَا يَكُونُ مُرَادًا بِالْحَدِيثِ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ وَالْهَادِي .

ON GUIDING AND MISGUIDING

Sunni orthodoxy maintains that *guiding* from God, the exalted, refers to the creating of guidance in the servant, while *misguiding* is the creating of misguidance in him. The Mu'tazilites state that God's guiding is His clarification of the correct path, while misguiding is His calling a servant "astray," or His judgment upon one as "being misguided," when the servant creates misguidance in himself.

The correct position is that of Sunni orthodoxy, due to the statement of God, the exalted, addressing the Prophet ﷺ, "Verily, you do not guide whomever you love" (28:56). If guiding were simply clarifying the correct path, it would not have been valid to negate it regarding the Prophet ﷺ, since he made the path clear to both those he loved and those he hated [for God's sake]. Another proof is the statement of God, the exalted, "He misguides whomever He wills, and guides whomever He wills" (35:8). If *guiding* referred to clarification of the correct path, the division [into two groups] would not be accurate, as His clarification is general and encompasses all individuals. Likewise, if *misguiding* were God's calling a servant "astray," it would have been restricted to the servant's will, not the will of God, since it is based on the servant's intention and choice.

Having said that, guiding can be attributed to the Prophet ﷺ in terms of [his] "being the means" and inviting to Islam, as God, the exalted, states, "And, verily, you guide to a straight path" (42:52)—that is, by clarification and invitation. It can be attributed to the Qur'an as well, as God, the exalted, states, "Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most upright" (17:9), since it is a means of being guided.

الْقَوْلُ فِي الْهُدَى وَالْإِضْلَالِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ الْهُدَى مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى خَلْقُ الْاِهْتِدَاءِ فِي الْعَبْدِ ، وَالْإِضْلَالُ خَلْقُ الضَّلَالَةِ فِيهِ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْهُدَى مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى بَيَانُ طَرِيقِ الصَّوَابِ ، وَالْإِضْلَالُ تَسْمِيَةُ الْعَبْدِ ضَالًّا أَوْ حُكْمُهُ بِالضَّلَالِ عِنْدَ خَلْقِ الْعَبْدِ الضَّلَالَ فِي نَفْسِهِ .

وَالصَّحِيحُ قَوْلُ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى خِطَابًا لِلنَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ﴿ إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِى مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ ﴾ ، وَلَوْ كَانَ الْهُدَى بَيَانَ طَرِيقِ الصَّوَابِ لَمَا صَحَّ النَّفْيُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ، لِأَنَّهُ بَيَّنَ الْهُدَى لِمَنْ أَحَبَّ وَأَبْغَضَ ؛ وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ﴾ ، وَلَوْ كَانَ الْهُدَى بَيَانَ طَرِيقِ الصَّوَابِ لَمْ تَتَحَقَّقِ الْقِسْمَةُ ، لِأَنَّ بَيَانَهُ عَامٌّ فِي حَقِّ الْكُلِّ ؛ وَكَذَا الْإِضْلَالُ لَوْ كَانَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْعَبْدِ ضَالًّا لَتَقَيَّدَ ذَلِكَ بِمَشِيئَةِ الْعَبْدِ لَا بِمَشِيئَةِ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، لِأَنَّ ذَلِكَ يَبْتَنِي عَلَى قَصْدِ الْعَبْدِ وَاخْتِيَارِهِ ذَلِكَ .

إِلَّا أَنَّ الْهِدَايَةَ تُضَافُ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِطَرِيقِ التَّسَبُّبِ وَالدَّعْوَةِ ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِىٓ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾ ، وَيَكُونُ الْمُرَادُ هُوَ الْبَيَانَ وَالدَّعْوَةَ . وَيُضَافُ إِلَى الْقُرْآنِ أَيْضًا ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ إِنَّ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ يَهْدِى لِلَّتِى هِىَ أَقْوَمُ ﴾ لِكَوْنِهِ سَبَبًا لِلْاِهْتِدَاءِ .

Likewise, just as misguiding is attributed to God in terms of "creating misguidance in the servant when he chooses it," it is attributed to Satan as well in terms of "being the means" and invitation, as God, the exalted, states [quoting Satan], "And I will surely misguide them and will surely give them false hopes" (4:119). It is also attributed to idols since they too are a means of misguidance, as God, the exalted, states, quoting al-Khalīl [Abraham ﷺ, the intimate friend of God, the exalted], "My Lord, verily, [the idols] have misguided many of mankind" (14:36). To summarize: one action cannot be attributed both to God, the exalted, and to others *from the same perspective* [but can from different perspectives], so what is meant is what we have stated. And God alone is the One who enables.

وَكَذَا الْإِضْلَالُ كَمَا أُضِيفَ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ حَيْثُ خَلْقُ الضَّلَالَةِ فِي الْعَبْدِ عِنْدَ اخْتِيَارِهِ ذَلِكَ ، أُضِيفَ إِلَى الشَّيْطَانِ أَيْضًا بِطَرِيقِ التَّسَبُّبِ وَالدَّعْوَةِ ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَلَأُضِلَّنَّهُمْ وَلَأُمَنِّيَنَّهُمْ ﴾ . وَكَذَا أُضِيفَ إِلَى الْأَصْنَامِ لِكَوْنِهَا سَبَباً لِلضَّلَالَةِ ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى خَبَرًا عَنِ الْخَلِيلِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ﴿ رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ﴾ ، وَالْفِعْلُ الْوَاحِدُ لَا يُضَافُ إِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى وَإِلَى غَيْرِهِ بِجِهَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ، فَكَانَ الْمُرَادُ مَا قُلْنَا . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

Annotations to *Predestination and the Existence of Evil*

1 Based on the beginning of this verse, "God does not burden any soul except within its capacity," the Ashʿarī and Māturīdī scholars are in agreement that, in actuality, God, the exalted, never imposes moral obligations beyond human capacity. In theory, however, the Ashʿarī scholars consider it logically *possible*, while the Māturīdī scholars deem it *impossible*—the former in light of divine choice and power, the latter in light of divine wisdom. One reason for the difference is that the two schools define *divine wisdom* differently, with the Ashʿarī school defining it as "perfectly doing whatever the agent wills," and the Māturīdī school as "creating a praiseworthy eventual outcome."

In any case, the difference on the issue of "obligation beyond capacity" is not significant, as it is purely theoretical. According to the Ashʿarī Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, it is one of the six *actual* differences between the two schools of Sunni Islam, all other differences mentioned in the literature being merely semantic. And even the six differences are minor and nonessential, while central issues, and even most secondary ones, are agreed upon between the two schools, such that the two schools can rightfully be identified as Sunni orthodoxy and its mainstream consensus (*ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāʿah*). (See the Introduction for more detail.)

The other five differences according to Imam al-Subkī are (1) on a similar basis as the above difference, Ashʿarī scholars consider it logically possible for God, the exalted, to reward the

disobedient and punish the obedient, although they maintain its impossibility based on revelation, because God has promised to do the opposite, while Māturīdī scholars deem it logically impossible; (2) Ashʿarī scholars believe God's eternal speech may be heard, while Māturīdī scholars believe it may not; (3) Ashʿarī scholars do not consider reason sufficient to require man to believe in God, for only the clear invitation of a prophet makes faith binding, while the Māturīdī school asserts that man is morally obliged to believe in monotheism, based on his faculty of reason; (4) Ashʿarī scholars consider divine attributes of action to be temporal, for they are actual associations of eternal divine power, and thus affirm a total of seven eternal affirmative attributes, while Māturīdī scholars consider divine attributes of action to be eternal, for they are expressions of an eighth affirmative attribute, termed the act of creating (*takwīn*); and (5) while both schools affirm the doctrine of prophetic infallibility with regard to major sins and ignoble minor sins, they differ regarding minor sins that are not ignoble—some Ashʿarī scholars believed it is possible for prophets to absentmindedly commit them, while other Ashʿarī scholars, along with all Māturīdī scholars, deemed it impossible, affirming prophetic infallibility with regard to any sin whatsoever. See Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyyah al-kubrā*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1918), 3:386–88.

2 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 4:325, 13:528.

3 He is ʿAmr b. Hishām b. al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī al-Qurashī, one of the notable leaders of Quraysh and among their most cunning from the age of pre-Islamic ignorance. He persecuted many of the Prophet's companions in the Meccan period of Islam. He was the fiercest of people in animosity toward the Prophet ﷺ, who called him "the Pharaoh of this community." He admitted in a private conversation with al-Akhnas b. Shurayq that he realized the Qur'an was true revelation from God, the exalted, yet he refused to accept Islam out of envy of the Prophet ﷺ. He persist-

ed in disbelief out of obstinate rebellion and was killed on the Great Day of Badr in the year 2/624. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 5:87.

4 For example, Imam al-Bayhaqī relates that the Prophet ﷺ would teach one of his daughters, "Say every morning, 'Glory be to God, with His unending praise; there is no power save with God. That which God chooses exists, and that which He does not choose does not exist. I know that God has power over everything and that God encompasses all things with His knowledge.' Whoever says this in the morning is protected until evening, and whoever says it in the evening is protected until morning" (*Kitāb al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid b. al-Ḥasan al-Kawtharī [Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li al-Turāth, n.d.], 160). Also, even if the specific chain of narration of this saying is weak, the claim of Imam al-Ṣābūnī remains valid, given that the community did receive the saying with acceptance, since its meaning is sound.

5 Imam al-Taftāzānī states,

> The Muʿtazilites contend that commands reflect will, and prohibitions reflect lack of will; so they deem a disbeliever's faith to be willed and his disbelief to be not willed. We, however, realize that [the divine will is distinct from the divine command/prohibition, and hence from divine pleasure/wrath. Therefore] a thing might be willed [by God] to exist yet be prohibited by God, or a thing might not be willed [by God] to exist yet still be commanded by God—due to much wisdom and numerous benefits that are known only to God, the exalted, or simply because "He is not asked about what He does" (Qur'an 21:23). (*Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 208)

6 Imam Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī states in his creed, "The nonexistent is not a 'thing' (*shay'*) [that is, does not exist in objective, extra-mental reality]," to which Imam al-Taftāzānī comments, "This is a self-evident judgment."

Imam al-Farhārī explains:

> This is known a priori and hence needs no proof. Yet it can be shown in various ways: (1) According to the Ashʿarī creed, existence is the entity itself, so negation of existence entails negation of being an entity [or thing]. (2) Possible nonexistent entities, of each species, are infinite according to [the Muʿtazilites], so were they to be affirmed in objective reality, [then an actual infinity would be affirmed in objective reality, which is impossible, so] that premise would be falsified by the demonstration of one-to-one correspondence. (3) Nonexistence is a negational attribute, so that to which it is attributed must [by definition] be negated. (4) Affirmation of the nonexistent [in objective reality] would contradict its being an object of divine power, since it would then be eternal; as for existence, according to the Muʿtazilites, it is an intermediate state (*ḥāl*), being neither existent nor nonexistent, and a state according to them is not an object of divine power. According to this, the Creator would not be "able to do" or be "a creator of" a single *thing*.

Imam al-Farhārī continues to explain the Muʿtazilite position and its rebuttal:

> They assert that a quiddity is of two types: (1) *negated*, which is termed unreal, or nonexistent and metaphysically impossible, such as a partner for the divine, and (2) *real*, which is termed "actual," or "a thing." This in turn can be either (a) *existent*, like the sun, or (b) *nonexistent yet metaphysically possible*, such as future events that will actually take place. So according to them, negation is more specific than nonexistence, and existence is more specific than being real.
>
> Their evidence for affirming the *possible nonexistent* as real includes: (1) Nonexistents are distinct [minor premise], and every distinct thing is objectively real [major premise]. The minor premise holds because some nonexistents are known while others are not, and some are within human capacity while others are not. The major premise holds because distinction is derived from receiving

mental indication, and whatever is not objectively real cannot be mentally indicated. The Sunni response is that if what is meant is distinction in extra-mental existence, then the first premise is false, but if it means [only mental and] conceptual distinction, then the second premise is false. All in all, the distinction and the realness of nonexistents are both purely mental/conceptual, not extra-mental. (2) The possible nonexistent is attributed with contingency (*imkān*), and contingency is an affirmative attribute, so [contingency] must necessarily be attributed to what is real. The Sunni response is that contingency is not affirmative, but rather a negational metaphysical consideration (*amr iʿtibārī salbī*), because it is a negation of necessity. (3) We affirm for nonexistents rulings that are affirmative and true, and affirmation is to affirm a predicate as true and real for a subject, and that is a derivative of affirming the subject itself as real. The Sunni response is that a *purely mental/conceptual* reality of a subject is sufficient for the validity of affirming a true ruling for it. (*Al-Nibrās*, 344)

To conclude, the Sunnis felt compelled to rebut this Muʿtazilite view because they believed affirming thing-ness/realness to the nonexistent was too close to the position of those philosophers who deemed the universe to be without a beginning (a position that entails disbelief). The Muʿtazilites did not hold the latter view and so were still regarded as Muslims. Yet because they deemed the nonexistent a "thing," they likened the divine act of creation to "taking a thing out from the cupboard of nonexistence and draping it with the garment of existence," as if the nonexistent had some ontic quality prior to its existence. To preserve the Islamic doctrine of creation ex nihilo, the Sunnis replied that the nonexistent is not a thing and is not real, and thus has no ontic quality at all; so when God creates something, He does so literally *out of nothing*. See al-Hāshimī, *Miftāḥ al-jannah*, 94.

7 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*, "The majority of Mu'tazilites state that whatever is best for a servant is incumbent upon God to do and give to that servant. Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and his followers, though, state that it is not incumbent upon God to do what is best for a particular servant; rather, He must do for *His servants in general* what entails benefit, and cannot do to them what entails harm" (72v. [BT]).

8 Imam Abū al-Barakāt Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī explains, "For indeed, the Muslims, along with adherents of all other [originally] revealed religions, without exception, seek divine help for obedience, protection from committing evil, and relief from their tribulations. Scripture also explicitly confirms this [practice]" (*Al-Iʿtimād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 70r-v. [BT]).

9 Imam al-Taftāzānī concludes his discussion on this issue, saying, "Finally, what exactly does 'incumbency upon God, the exalted,' mean? It cannot mean a moral obligation, which if contravened entails that the individual should be blamed and punished; that is obvious. Nor can it mean a logical/metaphysical obligation, such that the action emanates from Him without any choice, based on the idea that its not emanating from Him would entail metaphysical impossibilities, such as foolishness, ignorance, frivolity, stinginess, and the like. This is because this latter meaning would entail denial of His choice and reflect the position of the Arab Neoplatonist philosophers, which is clearly untenable" (*Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 241).

Imam al-Farhārī comments,

> The position of the Arab Neoplatonist philosophers was emanation without choice, which is false by consensus of the Ashʿarī, [Māturīdī,] and Mu'tazilite schools. To summarize, *incumbency* has two meanings: moral (*sharʿī*) and logical/metaphysical (*ʿaqlī*). The former is impossible with respect to the divine, and the second is the untenable position of the philosophers; so there is no valid meaning of "incumbency upon God, most glorious."

The Mu'tazilites in turn were perplexed about how to respond to this point. Their responses included: (1) What is meant by *incumbency* is "what is entailed by divine wisdom, despite God's having the power to abstain." So this would be a third meaning. I would respond that this incumbency appears to be what the Māturīdī school affirms. Yet it differs in that, according to [the Mu'tazilites and contrary to the Māturīdīs], contravening wisdom is a deficiency that is metaphysically impossible, so abstaining from what is best is impossible since it entails the impossible, even if it is in and of itself possible. So it is in fact similar to the view of the philosophers, who assert that the cosmos necessarily emanates from the divine entity, due to the ensuing benefits, even if its existence is in and of itself merely possible. Nevertheless, in my estimation, there is a difference between the two views: the philosophers do not regard benefit as what incites emanation of the cosmos, even if benefit is necessarily concomitant with the cosmos's existence, as opposed to the Mu'tazilites, for whom benefit is the foundational inciting factor. Moreover, it is obvious that what is reprehensible in the philosophers' position is the inherent necessity of emanation, as that contradicts divine power and choice, whereas the necessity of an act due to secondary considerations [which the Mu'tazilites profess] does not entail inherently necessary emanation, just as God's foreknowledge of His actions does not negate His choice therein. (2) What is meant [by *incumbency*] is what God will always do and never abstain from, without exception, even if its nonperformance is possible, just as with regular patterns of creation [that is, God's re-creation of likenesses of an accident in every instant, since Sunnis hold that accidents do not last two instants]. For we have no doubt, for example, that Mount Uḥud will not turn into gold in this very moment, even though it is logically/metaphysically possible. This is the interpretation of later Mu'tazilites. Based on this, neither doing [what is best] nor desisting from it is necessary such that its opposite is impossible, as the philosophers maintain. So nothing remains of incumbency, save the name. I would add, however, that regular

patterns of creation are the closest of metaphysical possibilities to metaphysical necessities, because they are both equivalent in the intellect's certainty of their occurrence. (3) What is related from some Mu'tazilites, that *incumbency* means that, according to the intellect, the one who desists from it deserves blame. (*Al-Nibrās*, 204–5)

The Hanafi scholar ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm al-Siyālkūtī (d. 1067/1657) explains that the first response above stems from a foundational principle of the Mu'tazilites that differs from the Sunni creed—namely, that the intellect determines good and evil (*taḥsīn ʿaqlī*), resulting in a hard natural law to which God Himself is bound. (This principle is mentioned explicitly in their third response above.) Sunni orthodoxy, however, affirms that God alone determines morality (*taḥsīn sharʿī*) and that He, most glorious, is free to act however He chooses. The ground of morality is not the intellect but only the divine will; God, the exalted, is the master of His creation and has absolute dominion over it, so He is necessarily transcendent above being blamed. See ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm, cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 241.

10 He is Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Kaʿbī, Mu'tazilite scholar and eponym of a Mu'tazilite sect called the Kaʿbiyyah. Originally from Balkh, he spent much time in Baghdad and authored many works. According to al-Samʿānī, one of his views was that God, the exalted, has no attribute of will, and that all divine actions occur without divine choice. He died in the year 319/931. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 4:65–66.

11 Although this particular wording has a problematic chain of narration, the meaning of the hadith is confirmed by the rigorously authenticated narration related by al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their *ṣaḥīḥ* collections: "Whoever would be delighted [or in another narration: whoever would love] for his provision to be expanded and his lifespan to be extended, then let him maintain

kinship ties." Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī explains the extension of one's lifespan as either (1) metaphorical increase—namely, an increase in the grace and blessing (*barakah*) of one's life, through increased ability to do good (*tawfīq*) and thus increased benefit from one's time, despite the same actual quantity of life—or (2) actual increase (as explained in the text above), yet from the vantage of the angel who is entrusted with the knowledge of one's lifespan, but not in the eternal knowledge of God, the exalted, which by definition is unchanging and unchangeable. So for example, the entrusted angel might be told that the person's lifespan will be one hundred years if he maintains kinship ties, but only sixty years if he does not, while God, the exalted, eternally knows the actions and the lifespan of the person—whether he will in fact maintain ties and exactly how long his fixed lifespan will be. The decree given to the angel is termed the *relative* or *conditional decree* (*al-qaḍā' al-muʿallaq*), and the actual eternal decree is termed the *absolute decree* (*al-qaḍā' al-mubram*). Both are alluded to in the Qur'anic verse "God effaces whatever He wills, and leaves intact [whatever He wills], but with Him is the source of the Book" (13:39)—the "effacing" and "leaving intact" refer to the changeable and apparent conditional decree given to the angel, while the "source of the Book" refers to the fixed and unchangeable absolute decree, which is eternally known to and eternally willed by God, the exalted. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 10:415–16; Usmani, *Takmilat fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 5:176.

The above interpretive lens is used to understand all narrations alluding to the changing of destiny, such as "Nothing wards off destiny save supplication (*duʿā'*), and nothing increases one's lifespan save righteousness (*birr*)" (Sunan al-Tirmidhī). A change cannot obtain with the absolute decree, but only with the conditional decree. Such narrations apprise the believer of powerful spiritual means (*asbāb*) that result in benefit, just as with physical means, such as using medicine for treating illness, while the believer realizes that all that transpires—of both means and their

conjoined effects—is eternally known to and eternally willed by God, the exalted.

12 Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī is Khuwaylid b. Khālid b. Muḥarrith, from the tribe of Banī Hudhayl b. Mudrikah of Muḍar, an outstanding poet who was from the immediate generation after the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Although he lived at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, he did not have the opportunity to meet him. He resided in Medina and participated in many expeditions and conquests. He died in the year 27/648. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:325.

13 Ramaḍān Effendī states,

> According to the Ashʿarī scholars, God's *decree* (*qaḍā'*) refers to His eternal will [meaning choice/selection], which is associated with things that shall occur in time, perfectly corresponding to their temporal reality, while His *predestination* (*qadar*) refers to His acts of creating those things with their particular qualities and measures. According to the Arab Neoplatonist philosophers, God's *decree* is a term for His knowledge of what should exist, such that things should exist in the most perfect order; this is what they mean by *divine will*. And *divine power* is their term for the emanation of things into concrete existence (*wujūd ʿaynī*), based on their causes/means, according to what was established in God's decree. (cited in the margin of al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 204)

Sunni theologians of both the Māturīdī and Ashʿarī schools saw the position of the philosophers as logically untenable and as undermining a central tenet of Islamic faith, in that it negated God's *actual choice*. (And related to that, it affirmed for the world a natural causation that contravened the orthodox belief that secondary causes, or natural means, have no power to create effects but are merely conventionally paired with their effects by God, the exalted, the sole creator of both.) Among themselves, though, the Māturīdī and Ashʿarī creeds differed only semantically on the divine decree and predestination, as each school defined the terms

opposite to the other: the Māturīdī *qaḍā'* is the Ashʿarī *qadar*, and the Māturīdī *qadar* is the Ashʿarī *qaḍā'*.

14 In his *ṣaḥīḥ* collection, Imam Muslim relates the hadith of Gabriel ﷺ, which includes the Archangel's request "So inform me of faith," to which the Prophet ﷺ responded, "That you believe in God, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, and the Last Day, and that you believe in destiny, both its good and evil," and in another narration, "and that you believe in destiny, all of it" (Usmani, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 1:321–43).

15 In *Al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, Imam al-Ṭabarānī relates a tradition of similar wording, "Whoever is not content with God's decree and does not believe in God's predestination, let him find a deity besides God." Imam al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1622) says its chain of narration is well-authenticated (*ḥasan*), and in his commentary, he affirms the same creedal tenet found above in the text: "There is no deity besides Him! So it is imperative for the servant to be pleased with the divine decree and predestination. And being pleased with the *decree* does not necessarily entail being pleased with *what is decreed*" (Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ra'ūf al-Munāwī, *Al-Taysīr bi sharḥ al-jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. [Riyadh: Maktabat al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī, 1988], 2:443). See also Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ra'ūf al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, 6 vols., 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, 2003), 6:297.

Human Sin and Divine Forgiveness

ON THOSE WHO COMMIT ENORMITIES

Sunni orthodoxy maintains that a believer who commits an enormity other than disbelief is not rendered a disbeliever or a hypocrite and does not leave the state of faith. If he dies without repentance [from that enormity], God, the exalted, will either pardon him, by the intercession of an intercessor or by His pure favor and largesse, or He will punish him commensurate to the iniquity, after which He will surely grant him paradise.[1] According to the Khawarij, he becomes a disbeliever. According to the Mu'tazilites, he leaves the state of faith but does not enter into outright disbelief; yet if he dies without repentance, he dwells in the fire forever. [Imam] al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī[2] used to say, "He is a hypocrite," but later renounced that position. The postponers [hard Murji'ites] state that with faith, sins do no harm, just as with disbelief, obedience has no benefit.

The correct position is that of Sunni orthodoxy, due to the statement of God, the exalted, among other verses,[3] "O people of faith! Return to God with sincere repentance" (66:8). He addresses them with the title of "faith," despite their having committed iniquities. Moreover, from the time of the Prophet ﷺ until today, the community (*ummah*) has collectively inherited [the traditional practice of] praying over the deceased who were among the People of the Qiblah [Muslims], as well as supplicating and seeking forgiveness for them, despite knowing of their having committed enormities. Likewise, it is well-known that in their ritual prayers, believers seek forgiveness for their parents, relatives, and acquaintances, without distinction [between those who committed enormities and those who did not], and with full conviction that seeking forgiveness for a disbeliever is impermissible.[4]

Essentially, the reality of faith is assent [belief in the heart] (*taṣdīq*), while verbal affirmation (*iqrār*) is but an indication of it.

الْقَوْلُ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْكَبَائِرِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ مَنِ ارْتَكَبَ كَبِيرَةً دُونَ الْكُفْرِ لَا يَصِيرُ كَافِرًا وَلَا مُنَافِقًا وَلَا يَخْرُجُ عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ ، وَإِن مَاتَ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَوْبَةٍ إِمَّا أَن يَعْفُوَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ بِشَفَاعَةِ شَفِيعٍ أَوْ بِفَضْلِهِ وَكَرَمِهِ ، وَإِمَّا أَن يُعَاقِبَهُ بِقَدْرِ جِنَايَتِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ لَا مَحَالَةَ . وَعِنْدَ الْخَوَارِجِ يَصِيرُ كَافِرًا . وَعِنْدَ الْمُعْتَزِلَةِ يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ فِي الْكُفْرِ ، وَإِن مَاتَ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَوْبَةٍ يُخَلَّدُ فِي النَّارِ . وَكَانَ الْحَسَنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ مُنَافِقٌ ، ثُمَّ رَجَعَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُرْجِئَةُ لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ الْإِيمَانِ ذَنبٌ كَمَا لَا يَنْفَعُ مَعَ الْكُفْرِ طَاعَةٌ .

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا قَالَ أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ تُوبُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا ﴾ ، خَاطَبَهُمْ بِاسْمِ الْإِيمَانِ مَعَ ارْتِكَابِ الْعِصْيَانِ ، إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ . وَالْأُمَّةُ تَوَارَثَتْ مِنْ عَصْرِ النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِلَى يَوْمِنَا هَذَا بِالصَّلَاةِ عَلَى مَن مَاتَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقِبْلَةِ ، وَالدُّعَاءِ وَالْاِسْتِغْفَارِ لَهُمْ ، مَعَ عِلْمِهِمْ بِارْتِكَابِ الْكَبَائِرِ . وَكَذَا اشْتَهَرَ اسْتِغْفَارُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّلَوَاتِ لِوَالِدِيهِمْ وَأَقَارِبِهِمْ وَمَعَارِفِهِمْ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَمْيِيزٍ ، مَعَ اعْتِقَادِهِمْ أَنَّ الْاِسْتِغْفَارَ لِلْكَافِرِ لَا يَجُوزُ .

وَتَحْقِيقُهُ هُوَ أَنَّ حَقِيقَةَ الْإِيمَانِ هُوَ التَّصْدِيقُ وَالْإِقْرَارَ أَمَارَةٌ عَلَيْهِ ،

Therefore, whoever verbalizes affirmation based on internal belief is characterized as being a believer. So as long as that belief does not change to denial, nor that verbal affirmation to rejection, he is not characterized as being a disbeliever. And, if he is not a disbeliever, he is [still] a believer, as there is no intermediate state between belief and denial, except doubt and hesitation, which by consensus entail disbelief. As for disobeying a command or prohibition, so long as one does not deem it to be permissible or make light of it, it does not entail denial [of the message] or rejection of the command or prohibition; rather, it only reflects being overcome by one's desire, passion, conceit, or laziness. How could it be otherwise, when it is accompanied by fear of punishment, hope in being pardoned, and determination to repent, all of which are the fruits of faith and indications of genuine internal belief in the divine promise and threat?

An example of this is [the directive of] a physician: he orders the patient to take medicine or prohibits the patient from what harms him, and the patient believes him and accepts his opinion. Despite that, however, [the patient] might still consume something harmful or refuse to take what is beneficial for him [that is, the medicine], yet do so while fearing the potential harm of that, feeling remorse, being ashamed in front of the physician, fearing his blame, and hoping to rectify such behavior. This is not a rejection of the physician's order, and he is not making light of the physician's right. This matter [of regarding belief and enormities] is no different.

And since, based on our discussion, it is established that he is still a believer, then he is from among the inhabitants of paradise, assuming he dies in that state, due to His statement "God has promised the believing men and the believing women gardens" (9:72). And, if he is among the inhabitants of paradise, it is impossible that he dwell in the fire forever, since permanent dwelling in the fire cannot occur with

فَمَن وُجِدَ مِنْهُ الْإِقْرَارُ عَنْ تَصْدِيقِ الْقَلْبِ اتَّصَفَ بِكَوْنِهِ مُؤْمِنًا. فَمَا لَمْ يَتَبَدَّلِ التَّصْدِيقُ بِالتَّكْذِيبِ وَالْإِقْرَارُ بِالْإِنْكَارِ لَا يُوصَفُ بِكَوْنِهِ كَافِرًا، وَإِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ كَافِرًا كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا، إِذْ لَا وَاسِطَةَ بَيْنَ التَّصْدِيقِ وَالتَّكْذِيبِ إِلَّا الشَّكُّ وَالتَّوَقُّفُ، وَإِنَّهُ كُفْرٌ بِالْاِتِّفَاقِ. وَأَمَّا مُخَالَفَةُ الْأَمْرِ وَارْتِكَابُ النَّهْيِ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُن بِطَرِيقِ الْاِسْتِحْلَالِ وَالْاِسْتِخْفَافِ لَا يَكُونُ تَكْذِيبًا وَلَا رَدًّا لِلْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ، بَلْ يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ إِمَّا لِغَلَبَةِ شَهْوَةٍ أَوْ حَمِيَّةٍ أَوْ أَنَفَةٍ أَوْ كَسَلٍ. كَيْفَ وَقَدِ اقْتَرَنَ بِذَلِكَ خَوْفُ الْعِقَابِ وَرَجَاءُ الْعَفْوِ وَالْعَزْمُ عَلَى التَّوْبَةِ، وَذَلِكَ كُلُّهُ ثَمَرَةُ الْإِيمَانِ وَأَمَارَةُ تَصْدِيقِ الْقَلْبِ بِالْوَعْدِ وَالْوَعِيدِ.

مِثَالُهُ الطَّبِيبُ لَمَّا أَمَرَ الْمَرِيضَ بِشُرْبِ الدَّوَاءِ أَوْ نَهَاهُ عَمَّا يَضُرُّهُ وَصَدَّقَهُ الْمَرِيضُ وَقَبِلَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ، وَلَكِن رُبَّمَا يُقْدِمُ مَعَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَكْلِ مَا يَضُرُّهُ أَوْ يَمْتَنِعُ عَنْ شُرْبِ مَا يَنْفَعُهُ، مَعَ خَوْفِ الضَّرَرِ وَالنَّدَامَةِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَالْحَيَاءِ مِنَ الطَّبِيبِ وَالْخَوْفِ مِن مَلَامَتِهِ وَرَجَاءِ التَّدَارُكِ مِنْهُ، لَا يَكُونُ هَذَا رَدًّا لِأَمْرِ الطَّبِيبِ وَلَا اسْتِخْفَافًا بِحَقِّهِ، كَذَا هَذَا.

وَإِذَا ثَبَتَ بِمَا ذَكَرْنَا أَنَّهُ مُؤْمِنٌ كَانَ مِنْ جُمْلَةِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ لَوْ مَاتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ جَنَّٰتٍ ﴾ الْآيَةَ، وَإِذَا كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ الْخُلُودُ فِي النَّارِ، لِأَنَّ الْخُلُودَ فِي النَّارِ لَا يُتَصَوَّرُ مَعَ

entrance into paradise. Moreover, since permanent dwelling in the fire is a threat [specifically] for disbelief, the former being the greatest punishment and the latter the greatest crime, the punishment is commensurate to the crime; so if one were given that punishment for other than disbelief, it would be a punishment greater than the crime, which is not just.

If it is said: The threat of punishing those who commit enormities has come [in revelation] without qualification or exception, so if some of them could be pardoned, it would entail discrepancy between a divine statement [of action] and action, which is not possible. We respond: Some of our fellow Māturīdīs have conceded the generality of the threat for all sinners, yet they state that breaking a threat [that is, not carrying through with it] reflects generosity, and is therefore possible from God, the exalted.

However, the expert theologians (*muḥaqqiqūn*) among our fellow Māturīdīs do not allow for the possibility of any discrepancy [between statement and action] from God, the exalted, neither in His promise nor in His threat, because that would entail changing of speech (*tabaddul al-qawl*), while He, the exalted, states, "My speech is not changed" (50:29).[5] Moreover, God, the exalted, has [even] called His threat a "promise," which He has said He will not break, for He states, "They seek hastening of the punishment, and God will never break His promise" (22:47). They do, however, admit [the possibility and validity] of divine pardoning. So it is clear that the one to be pardoned is not intended [in the first place] by the generality of the threat. "Pardoning" then clarifies the specification of this sinner [as being excluded] from the general threat, and specification is akin to making an exception; if some sinners were excluded from the generality of the threat as an exception, that would not entail "breaking" [the promise or threat]. So the same would apply if they were specified [as excluded].

دُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْخُلُودَ فِي النَّارِ لَمَّا كَانَ مَوْعُودًا لِلْكَافِرِ ، وَهُوَ أَعْظَمُ الْعُقُوبَاتِ وَالْكُفْرُ أَعْظَمُ الْجِنَايَاتِ ، كَانَ الْخُلُودُ فِي النَّارِ مِثْلًا لِجِنَايَةِ الْكُفْرِ ، فَلَوْ عُذِّبَ بِهِ عَلَى غَيْرِ الْكُفْرِ كَانَ زِيَادَةً عَلَى قَدْرِ الْجِنَايَةِ فَلَا يَكُونُ عَدْلًا .

فَإِنْ قِيلَ الْوَعِيدُ بِتَعْذِيبِ مُرْتَكِبِي الْكَبَائِرِ وَرَدَ مُطْلَقًا ، فَلَوْ جَازَ الْعَفْوُ عَنِ الْبَعْضِ لَكَانَ خُلْفًا فِي الْخَبَرِ ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ . قُلْنَا قَدْ سَلَّمَ بَعْضُ أَصْحَابِنَا رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ عُمُومَ الْوَعِيدِ فِي جَمِيعِ الْعُصَاةِ ، لَكِنَّهُمْ قَالُوا الْخُلْفُ فِي الْوَعِيدِ كَرَمٌ ، فَيَجُوزُ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى .

وَالْمُحَقِّقُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا لَمْ يُجَوِّزُوا الْخُلْفَ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، لَا فِي الْوَعْدِ وَلَا فِي الْوَعِيدِ ، لِأَنَّهُ تَبَدُّلُ الْقَوْلِ ، وَقَدْ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ مَا يُبَدَّلُ ٱلْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ ﴾ ؛ وَلِأَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى سَمَّى الْوَعِيدَ وَعْدًا وَنَفَى الْخُلْفَ فِيهِ ، فَقَالَ ﴿ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِٱلْعَذَابِ وَلَن يُخْلِفَ ٱللَّهُ وَعْدَهُۥ ﴾ . لَكِنَّهُمْ قَالُوا بِالْعَفْوِ ، فَتَبَيَّنَ أَنَّ الْمَعْفُوَّ عَنْهُ لَمْ يَكُن مُرَادًا بِعُمُومِ الْوَعِيدِ ، فَيَكُونُ الْعَفْوُ بَيَانًا لِتَخْصِيصِ هَٰذَا الْمُذْنِبِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ الْعَامِّ ، وَالتَّخْصِيصُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الِاسْتِثْنَاءِ ، وَلَوِ اسْتُثْنِيَ بَعْضُ الْعُصَاةِ مِنْ عُمُومِ الْوَعِيدِ لَا يَكُونُ خُلْفًا ، فَكَذَلِكَ لَوْ خُصِّصَ .

Now if it is said: God, the exalted, states, "Whoever intentionally kills a believer, his recompense is the inferno (*jahannam*), dwelling therein forever" (4:93) as well as "Whoever disobeys God and His Messenger and trespasses His boundaries, He shall place him in a fire, dwelling therein forever" (4:14). He has threatened permanent dwelling [in the fire] for killing and for disobedience. We respond: As for the first verse, it was revealed concerning one who deems killing permissible, as proven by the circumstance of its revelation, as mentioned in the books of exegesis; such a person is a disbeliever.

Likewise, the second verse was revealed concerning disbelievers, since only a disbeliever trespasses all of God's boundaries. Not to mention, "permanent dwelling" could be used to indicate a lengthy period that is nevertheless short of eternity [as is well-known from valid linguistic usage].

Many issues are based on this [theological doctrine, such as the next four discussions, on (1) Intercession; (2) the Impossibility of God's Pardoning Disbelief; (3) the Impossibility of Divine Oppression, Foolishness, or Lying; and (4) Enormities and Minor Sins.]

ON INTERCESSION

According to us, yet contrary to the Mu'tazilites, intercession is an affirmed tenet. This is because, if it is possible for God to pardon without any intermediary, then it is a fortiori possible by the intercession of prophets and the chosen elite. Yet according to them, if pardoning is not possible in the first place, then intercession serves no purpose. Our proof on this issue is the statement of God, the exalted, "So pardon them and seek forgiveness for them" (3:159), as well as the Exalted's statement "And seek forgiveness for your mistake, as well as for the believing men and women" (47:19); these are commands to intercede. Likewise is the Exalted's statement "So the intercession of those who intercede will not benefit them [that is, disbelievers]" (74:48): if it had no benefit for the believers either, it would be meaningless to

فَإِنْ قِيلَ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَن يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآؤُهُۥ جَهَنَّمُ خَـٰلِدًا فِيهَا ﴾ ، وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَن يَعْصِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُۥ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَـٰلِدًا فِيهَا ﴾ ، أَوْعَدَ الْخُلُودَ بِالْقَتْلِ وَالْعِصْيَانِ . قُلْنَا أَمَّا الْآيَةُ الْأُولَى فَنَزَلَتْ فِي حَقِّ مُسْتَحِلِّ قَتْلِ الْمُؤْمِنِ ، بِدَلِيلِ نُزُولِ الْآيَةِ ، كَمَا ذُكِرَ فِي التَّفْسِيرِ ، وَإِنَّهُ كَافِرٌ . وَكَذَا الْآيَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ نَزَلَتْ فِي حَقِّ الْكَافِرِ ، فَإِنَّ التَّعَدِّي عَنْ جَمِيعِ الْحُدُودِ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا مِنَ الْكَافِرِ ؛ عَلَى أَنَّ الْخُلُودَ يُذْكَرُ وَيُرَادُ بِهِ طُولُ الْمُدَّةِ دُونَ الْأَبَدِ .

فَصْلٌ

وَيُبْتَنَى عَلَى هَذَا مَسَائِلُ :

الأُولَى مَسْأَلَةُ الشَّفَاعَةِ

فَإِنَّهَا ثَابِتَةٌ عِنْدَنَا ، خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ . وَذَلِكَ أَنَّهُ لَمَّا جَازَ عَفْوُ اللهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ وَاسِطَةٍ فَأَوْلَى أَن يَجُوزَ بِشَفَاعَةِ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ وَالْأَخْيَارِ . وَعِنْدَهُمْ لَمَّا امْتَنَعَ الْعَفْوُ لَا فَائِدَةَ فِي الشَّفَاعَةِ . وَحُجَّتُنَا فِي ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ فَٱعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَٱسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ ﴾ ؛ وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَٱسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنۢبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَـٰتِ ﴾ ، وَهَذَا أَمْرٌ بِالشَّفَاعَةِ ؛ وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَـٰعَةُ ٱلشَّـٰفِعِينَ ﴾ ، فَلَوْ لَمْ تَنْفَعْ أَيْضًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَمْ يَكُن لِتَخْصِيصِ الْكَافِرِينَ

specify disbelievers. There is also the well-known hadith—namely, the Prophet's statement "My intercession is for those of my community who commit enormities."[6] Altogether, the hadith[7] on intercession approach incontestable multiple-chain transmission, and are hence definitely not less than being well-known; denial of a well-known narration is a reprehensible innovation (*bidʿah*) [which in creed results in heresy].[8]

ON WHETHER OR NOT GOD'S PARDONING DISBELIEF IS LOGICALLY POSSIBLE

Our fellow Māturīdī scholars maintain that it is not possible, while the Ashʿarī scholars state it is [logically] possible [yet impossible based on revelation]. Likewise, according to them, it is possible [for God] to place believers in the fire forever, and disbelievers in paradise forever, and that would not entail foolishness (*safah*), except that revelation has indicated that He will not do that. According to us, however, that is not logically possible [in the first place].

The correct position (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is what we state, since wisdom (*ḥikmah*) entails distinguishing between one who does right and one who does wrong. God, the exalted, says, "Is the recompense of excellence other than excellence?" (55:60), and "The recompense of an evil act is an evil act like it" (42:40). This can be further elucidated by the fact that God, the exalted, refutes the one who treats the two equally, as He says (and what a mighty Speaker!), "Or do those who commit evil reckon that We will treat them as [We do] those who believed and worked acts of righteousness..." until His statement "How wrong is their judgment!" (45:21). Similar is the statement of God, the exalted, "So would We then treat those who submit as [We treat] criminals? What is wrong with you—how do you judge?" (68:35–36).

مَعْنًى ؛ وَكَذَا الْحَدِيثُ الْمَشْهُورُ ، وَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ « شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي » ؛ وَالْأَحَادِيثُ فِي بَابِ الشَّفَاعَةِ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ التَّوَاتُرِ ، فَلَا أَقَلَّ مِنَ الشُّهْرَةِ ، وَإِنْكَارُ الْخَبَرِ الْمَشْهُورِ بِدْعَةٌ .

الثَّانِيَةُ مَسْأَلَةُ الْعَفْوِ عَنِ الْكُفْرِ وَالشِّرْكِ ، هَلْ يَجُوزُ فِي الْعَقْلِ أَمْ لَا ؟

قَالَ أَصْحَابُنَا رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ لَا يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ ، وَقَالَتِ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةُ يَجُوزُ . وَكَذَا يَجُوزُ عِنْدَهُمْ تَخْلِيدُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي النَّارِ وَتَخْلِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ ، وَلَا يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ سَفَهًا ، إِلَّا أَنَّ السَّمْعَ دَلَّ عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَا يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ . وَعِنْدَنَا لَا يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ .

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا قُلْنَا ، لِأَنَّ قَضِيَّةَ الْحِكْمَةِ التَّفْرِقَةُ بَيْنَ الْمُحْسِنِ وَالْمُسِيءِ ، قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ هَلْ جَزَآءُ ٱلْإِحْسَٰنِ إِلَّا ٱلْإِحْسَٰنُ ﴾ ، قَالَ ﴿ وَجَزَٰٓؤُاْ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ﴾ . وَيُوضِحُهُ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى رَدَّ عَلَى مَنْ حَكَمَ بِالتَّسْوِيَةِ بَيْنَ الْمُسِيءِ وَالْمُحْسِنِ ، فَقَالَ عَزَّ مِنْ قَائِلٍ ﴿ أَمْ حَسِبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱجْتَرَحُواْ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ أَن نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ ﴾ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ ﴿ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴾ ، وَكَذَا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ أَفَنَجْعَلُ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ كَٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ ﴾ .

According to our fellow Māturīdīs, the difference between disbelief[9] and other sins is that the former entails the ultimate crime—it can never be allowed, and its unlawfulness can never be abrogated. Therefore it can never be pardoned, nor can its penalty be waived [that is, if one dies in that state].

Moreover, the disbeliever deems it as true and correct, seeking no pardon or forgiveness for it, so pardoning it would contravene wisdom. Lastly, disbelief is a conviction of perpetuity and hence deserves a perpetual recompense, as opposed to all other sins.

ON WHETHER OR NOT DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE INCLUDES OPPRESSION, FOOLISHNESS, OR LYING

According to us, they are inherently impossible, so God is not described as "having the power" to act in such ways. This is contrary to the view of the Mu'tazilites, who maintain that He "has the power, yet does not act accordingly." This view is incorrect, since it is possible to ascribe to Him whatever He has the power to do, yet [in this case] that [ascription] is impossible [as is agreed upon between us and them]. Moreover if it were possible, it would be so either with the attribute of justice remaining or with its removal. The first is absurd, as that would entail the coexistence of opposites. The second is also absurd, since [as is agreed upon between us and them] justice is necessary for God, the exalted, so its absence is impossible.

وَالْفَرْقُ لِأَصْحَابِنَا بَيْنَ الْكُفْرِ وَسَائِرِ الذُّنُوبِ أَنَّ الْكُفْرَ نِهَايَةٌ فِي الْجِنَايَةِ وَأَنَّهُ مِمَّا لَا يَحْتَمِلُ الْإِبَاحَةَ وَرَفْعَ الْحُرْمَةِ ، فَكَذَا لَا يَحْتَمِلُ الْعَفْوَ وَرَفْعَ الْغَرَامَةِ .

وَلِأَنَّ الْكَافِرَ يَعْتَقِدُهُ حَقًّا وَصَوَابًا وَلَا يَطْلُبُ لَهُ عَفْوًا وَمَغْفِرَةً ، فَلَمْ يَكُنِ الْعَفْوُ عَنْهُ حِكْمَةً ؛ وَلِأَنَّ الْكُفْرَ اعْتِقَادُ الْأَبَدِ فَيُوجِبُ جَزَاءَ الْأَبَدِ ، بِخِلَافِ سَائِرِ الذُّنُوبِ .

وَالثَّالِثَةُ أَنَّ الظُّلْمَ وَالسَّفَهَ وَالْكَذِبَ هَلْ هِيَ مَقْدُورَةٌ لِلّٰهِ تَعَالَى أَمْ لَا ؟ فَعِنْدَنَا هِيَ مُسْتَحِيلَةٌ لَا يُوصَفُ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِالْقُدْرَةِ عَلَيْهَا ، خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ ، فَإِنَّهُمْ قَالُوا يَقْدِرُ وَلَا يَفْعَلُ . وَإِنَّهُ فَاسِدٌ لِأَنَّ مَا كَانَ مَقْدُورًا لَهُ جَازَ أَن يُوصَفَ بِهِ ، وَإِنَّهُ مُحَالٌ ؛ وَلِأَنَّهُ لَوْ جَازَ مِنْهُ إِمَّا أَن يَجُوزَ مَعَ بَقَاءِ صِفَةِ الْعَدْلِ أَوْ مَعَ زَوَالِهَا ، لَا وَجْهَ إِلَى الْأَوَّلِ لِأَنَّ فِيهِ اجْتِمَاعَ الضِّدَّيْنِ ، وَلَا وَجْهَ إِلَى الثَّانِي لِأَنَّ الْعَدْلَ وَاجِبٌ لِلّٰهِ تَعَالَى فَيَسْتَحِيلُ عَدَمُهُ .

ON ENORMITIES AND MINOR SINS

Some people state that everything by which a person disobeys God, the exalted, is an enormity. This is contrary to what God explicitly states in His Book, for He, the exalted, says, "[The book of a person's deeds given to him on Judgment Day] omits neither minor sin nor enormity, but rather enumerates them in full" (18:49).

Others state that any sin in which a person persists is an enormity, while that for which he seeks forgiveness is a minor sin.[10] The correct position on this matter is that *minor sin* and *enormity* are two relative terms; neither can be defined by itself, just as with good works [being either *major* or *minor*].

So every act of disobedience is a minor sin when compared with that which is more severe, yet an enormity when compared with that which is less severe. The absolute enormity, then, is disbelief, as there is no iniquity greater than it, while all others are minor *in comparison*. This is what is meant by the statement of God, the exalted, "If you all avoid the enormities of that from which you all have been prohibited, then We will wipe out for you all your sins" (4:31), meaning—and God knows best—"If you avoid disbelief, We will wipe out everything below it," like the statement of God, the exalted, "And He will forgive all else for whomsoever He wills" (4:48, 116). And the plural form used in "enormities" is to correspond with the plural form of those who are prohibited [that is, "you all"], which necessitates division of parts over individuals, such as their statement [in Arabic usage] "The people rode their beasts and wore their garments" [indicating that each person rode one beast and wore one garment]. Moreover, a variant recitation of "the enormity of that which you all have been prohibited from" uses the singular, whereby the problem is resolved. And God alone is the One who enables and the One who guides.

وَالرَّابِعَةُ بَيَانُ الْكَبَائِرِ وَالصَّغَائِرِ

قَالَ بَعْضُ النَّاسِ كُلُّ مَا عَصَى الْمَرْءُ بِهِ اللهَ تَعَالَى فَهُوَ كَبِيرَةٌ ، وَ[لَكِنْ] هُوَ خِلَافُ مَا نَصَّ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي كِتَابِهِ ، قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّآ أَحْصَىٰهَا ﴾ .

وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ مَا أَصَرَّ الْمَرْءُ عَلَيْهِ فَهُوَ كَبِيرَةٌ ، وَمَا اسْتَغْفَرَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ صَغِيرَةٌ . وَالْحَقُّ فِيهِ أَنَّ الصَّغِيرَةَ وَالْكَبِيرَةَ اسْمَانِ إِضَافِيَّانِ لَا يُعَرَّفَانِ بِذَاتَيْهِمَا ، كَمَا فِي الْحَسَنَاتِ .

فَكُلُّ مَعْصِيَةٍ إِنْ أُضِيفَتْ إِلَى مَا فَوْقَهَا فَهِيَ صَغِيرَةٌ ، وَإِنْ أُضِيفَتْ إِلَى مَا دُونَهَا فَهِيَ كَبِيرَةٌ . فَالْكَبِيرَةُ الْمُطْلَقَةُ هِيَ الْكُفْرُ ، إِذْ لَا ذَنبَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْهُ ، وَمَا عَدَاهُ فَهُوَ صَغِيرَةٌ بِالنِّسْبَةِ إِلَيْهِ ، وَهُوَ الْمُرَادُ بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ إِن تَجْتَنِبُواْ كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنكُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ ﴾ يَعْنِي - وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ - إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا الْكُفْرَ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُم مَا دُونَهُ ، كَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ﴾ . وَذِكْرُ الْجَمْعِ فِي الْكَبَائِرِ مُقَابِلٌ بِذِكْرِ جَمْعِ الْمَنْهِيِّينَ ، فَيُوجِبُ انْقِسَامَ الْآحَادِ عَلَى الْآحَادِ ، كَقَوْلِهِمْ رَكِبَ الْقَوْمُ دَوَابَّهُمْ وَلَبِسُوا ثِيَابَهُمْ ؛ عَلَى أَنَّهُ قَدْ قُرِئَ (كَبِيرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ) بِلَفْظِ الْفَرْدِ ، فَيَزُولُ الْإِشْكَالُ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ وَالْهَادِي .

Annotations to *Human Sin and Divine Forgiveness*

1 This statement expresses the Sunni doctrine of "postponement of verdict" (*irjāʾ sunnī*), attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah and later codified by the Ashʿarī and Māturīdī schools. It could be termed *soft Murjiʾism*, in comparison with the view that sins have no consequence in the afterlife—an antinomian view with potential nihilistic repercussions for both personal behavior and societal morality. That hard Murji'ism was deemed heretical (*irjāʾ bidʿī*) by both Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs, and earlier by Abū Ḥanīfah himself. When unqualified, the word *Murjiʾī* refers to "hard Murji'ism" and was used as a pejorative in Islamic theological discourse. See al-Ḥājj, *Imām al-aʾimmah al-fuqahāʾ*, 171–76, citing al-Shahrastānī in *Al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, al-Taftāzānī in *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*, Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī in *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar*, al-Laknawī in *Al-Rafʿ wa al-takmīl*, and others.

In the Sunni view, practice is not part of the quiddity of faith but instead comes from its perfection and completion (*kamāl*). Hence, a sinful Muslim is still a believer, since the essence of faith—belief in the basic creed of Islam—is sound in his heart. This tenet also serves as the interpretive lens for those texts that conjoin faith and action, such as the prophetic statements that begin with "None of you have faith until," which are understood by Sunni orthodoxy as meaning "None of you have *the completion and perfection* of faith until." See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 114–25.

2 He is Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥasan b. Yasār al-Baṣrī, who was from the immediate generation after the companions of the Prophet ﷺ; he was the leading scholar of the people of Basra and the masterful savant of the entire community (*ḥabr al-ummah*) in his era. Renowned for his piety, scholarship, and eloquence, he feared no one and would often enjoin political leaders to virtue. Imam al-Ghazālī said that his statements were most like the statements of prophets and that his piety was closest to the piety of the Prophet's companions. His narrations are numerous and replete with wisdom. He died in the year 110/728. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:226.

3 Imam Abū al-Barakāt Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī states,

> The correct position (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is ours, due to the statement of God, the exalted, "O people of faith! Prescribed upon you is [that you exercise] retaliatory justice for those murdered" (2:178): one who commits intentional murder is still called "a person of faith," despite that act being an enormity. Also God's statement "If two factions between the believers fight one other, then rectify between the two [with arbitration]" (49:9), as well as "O people of faith! A testimony between you if death comes upon one of you, at the time of bequest, is two upright individuals from yourselves" (5:106): if the term *faith* were inapplicable to someone not upright, God would have said "two individuals from yourselves," since the beginning of the verse addresses believers. So it is established that a believer *might* or *might not* be upright. This is what the Shaykh [Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī] said in [*Kitāb al-tawḥīd*]. (*Al-Iʿtimād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 86r. [BT])

4 An example of the Sunni position from the hadith tradition is what al-Bukhārī and Muslim relate in their *ṣaḥīḥ* collections, that the Prophet's companion Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ﷺ (d. 32/653) said, "I once came to God's Emissary ﷺ, who, while donning a white garment, was asleep. Then I came back again and he had woken up, and he said, 'There is no servant who says *lā ilāha illā*

Allāh [that is, a Muslim] and then eventually dies upon that, save that he shall enter paradise.' I said, 'Even if he fornicated and stole?' He replied, 'Even if he fornicated and stole.' I again said, 'Even if he fornicated and stole?' He replied, 'Even if he fornicated and stole.' I said [a third time], 'Even if he fornicated and stole?' He replied, 'Even if he fornicated and stole, in spite of Abū Dharr!'" See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 10:283; Usmani, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 2:58–59.

5 Regarding the category of disobedient believers discussed above, there is a difference of opinion between the Ashʿarī and Māturīdī creeds on the divine threat. The Ashʿarī (and as mentioned in the text, some Māturīdī) scholars maintain that it is possible for God, the exalted, to not execute His threat of temporary punishment *to any believer*, out of His generosity, for they interpret scripture that threatens punishment (to believers for their disobedience) as having the implied phrase "if I so choose." According to the classical Arabic language in which the Qur'an was sent, such an implication was possible when a generous individual would make a threat but not when he would make a promise. The majority of Māturīdī scholars, however, reject this interpretation and maintain that, for all types of enormities, at least some disobedient believers must be punished; otherwise, those scriptural threats would entail lying, which is impossible for the divine. Of course, the Ashʿarī scholars agree that lying is impossible for God, the exalted, and this is a point of scholarly consensus, yet they do not deem non-execution of the threat to be lying, since the implied "if I so choose" retains the truthfulness of the divine threat, despite subsequent pardoning.

Lastly, this theological debate applies only to scriptural threats to disobedient believers for their disobedience. It does not apply to scriptural threats for disbelief itself, which by scholarly consensus will not be forgiven without repentance (based on God's designation of that sin as unforgiveable), due to the unequivocal and categorical nature of those scriptural texts (though this

ruling pertains only to morally responsible individuals). See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 242, 452–53.

6 Related by Ibn Ḥanbal in his Musnad; Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and al-Nasā'ī in their Sunan collections; Ibn Ḥibbān in his Ṣaḥīḥ; al-Ḥākim in his *Al-Mustadrak*; al-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*; and al-Khaṭīb (d. 463/1072) in *Tārīkh Baghdād*. Imam al-Munāwī comments, "So he shall intercede for some people to not enter the fire, and for others to be taken out therefrom or to have their punishment lightened therein." See al-Munāwī, *Al-Taysīr*, 2:78.

7 The primary and greatest intercession (*al-shafāʿah al-ʿuẓmā fī faṣl al-qaḍā'*) of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the means by which the lengthy, agonizing torment of "waiting for judgment" ends and judgment commences. It is universal, for all of humanity, providing them relief from an anxiety so overwhelming that it drives people to desire commencement even if their end is the fire. It is the first part of what is referred to as the *praiseworthy station* (*al-maqām al-maḥmūd*; see 17:79), since in that station, all people shall praise him abundantly, and a great banner of praise shall be erected for him. The banner has three corners (eastern, western, and central) and all prophets and believers will be under it. The last part of that station is when everyone destined for everlasting paradise is in paradise, and when everyone destined for the everlasting fire is in the fire.

This greatest intercession is depicted in the lengthy hadith narrations of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, which describe how people will go from prophet to prophet seeking their intercession, yet each will reply, "My own self! My own self! (*nafsī nafsī*)" until finally they reach the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who replies, "It is for me (*ana lahā*)." He then proceeds to the throne and prostrates, whereupon God, the exalted, reveals to him a praise of the divine never before revealed, with which he praises God and is then afforded intercession. The Prophet ﷺ then says, "My community! My community! (*ummatī ummatī*)," and the request is granted.

Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī relate that the Prophet ﷺ said, "My intercession is for those of my community who commit enormities" (see previous note for citation).

The Prophet ﷺ is also granted other lesser intercessions, such as (1) for some believers to enter paradise without any reckoning, (2) for some sinful believers who deserve temporary punishment to be spared from entering the fire, (3) for other sinful believers placed in the fire temporarily to be taken out early, (4) for some of the righteous of his community to have their shortcomings in their acts of obedience overlooked, (5) for believers in paradise to be granted higher ranks therein, (6) for disbelievers in the fire forever to have their torment be lessened at certain times, (7) for children of disbelievers to not be punished, and other types. Finally, the greatest intercession is the key that unlocks all other intercessions, and permission to intercede will then be granted to many others, such as other prophets and messengers, angels, the Prophet's companions, martyrs, righteous scholars, saints, and children. And ultimately, for those who said *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (that is, Muslims) yet never once did a good deed, God Himself, the exalted, shall intercede. See al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 400–403; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 448–49.

8 Denial of incontestable multiple-chain transmission, however, could entail disbelief, because such transmission is a source of definitive knowledge.

9 At bottom, *disbelief* (*kufr*) is to deny God's existence or oneness, or to deny the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ. The former denial includes denying any necessary tenet of God's divinity, such as holding the naturalistic belief that things alone create their effects, by their very natures, independent of the will of God, the exalted. The latter (denying Muḥammad's prophethood) extends to any other tenet of Islam that is "necessarily known of the religion"—namely, all that is (1) transmitted from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ by incontestable mutliple-chain transmission

and (2) definitive in meaning (*qaṭʿī al-dalālah*), being free of ambiguity (*shubhah*) in its signification, whether from the Qur'an, widespread prophetic practice, or verbalized consensus of the Prophet's companions. Based on these criteria, tenets that are "necessarily known of the religion" are known with certainty to have been expressed by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, whereby denial of one of them is akin to rejecting his statement or ascribing a lie to him, which is the very basis of disbelief. Such tenets include the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ; Islam's abrogation of all previous religions, and hence its status as the only path of salvation until the end of time ("Islam" here referring to the specific religion of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and not merely the Islam of all prophets); the obligatory status of the five pillars of Islam; and the unlawful status of Islam's well-known and agreed-upon enormities, such as murder, theft, adultery, drinking wine, and homosexual intercourse. Disbelief is not entailed by nonperformance of those obligations or by committing those enormities; rather, disbelief is entailed only by denying the *obligation* of the former and *prohibition* of the latter, in and of themselves.

Lastly, according to the Ashʿarī school, all beliefs—even idolatry or outright atheism—are excused for those people who never received the invitation to Islam, or according to Imam al-Ghazālī, who received only a distorted depiction of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Such people are under a divine amnesty in the hereafter and are not punished for their disbelief, even though their worldly designation of "disbeliever" or "non-Muslim" (kafir) remains the same. The Māturīdī scholars, however, still deem such people as morally responsible to affirm the existence and oneness of God, the exalted, such that contrary beliefs preclude salvation in the afterlife. See al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 423–24; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 473–74; Khalīl b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Naḥlāwī, *Al-Durar al-mubāḥah fī al-ḥaẓar wa al-ibāḥah*, ed. Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Burhānī, 3rd ed. (Damascus: al-Maṭbaʿah

al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1987), 91–92. For a detailed exposition of Islam's abrogation of previous religions and its doctrinal incompatibility with the perennialist notion of "the universal validity of all religions," see Keller, *Sea Without Shore*, 305–49.

10 In his *Kitāb al-kabā'ir* (Book of enormities), Imam al-Dhahabī defines an enormity as "any sin entailing either a threat of punishment in the hereafter explicitly mentioned by the Koran or hadith, a prescribed legal penalty (hadd), or being accursed by Allah or His messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace)." See Nuh Ha Mim Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, rev. ed. (Beltsville, MD: Amana, 1994), 652.

Faith, Belief, and the Intellect

ON FAITH AND SUBMISSION

The People of the Qiblah [Muslims] are in agreement that faith in God, the exalted, is incumbent [upon humanity], and disbelief in Him is forbidden. However, they differ as to whether its incumbency is based on the intellect or on revelation, and thus, if one whom the call has not reached dies in [a state of] disbelief, is he punished or not?

[Imam] al-Ḥākim al-Shahīd[1] [d. 334/945] narrates in *Al-Muntaqā* that Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ said, "There is no excuse for anyone to be ignorant of his Creator, due to that which he sees of the creation of the heavens and earth, his own self, and the rest of the world." [Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ] also said, "Had God, the exalted, not sent a messenger, it still would have been mandatory for humanity to know Him, based on their intellects." The Ashʿarī creed states that there is no moral responsibility for an individual based on the intellect alone, yet by it, the goodness (*ḥusn*) or evil (*qubḥ*) of some things can be ascertained, as well as the temporality of the universe and the eternality of the Creator. The heretics (*malāḥidah*), extreme Shia (*rawāfiḍ*), anthropomorphists (*al-mushabbihah*), and early Khawarij (*khawārij muḥakkimah*) state that nothing can be ascertained by the intellect nor is anything mandatory based on it.

The Muʿtazilites state that the intellect necessitates faith in God, the exalted, and gratitude for His blessings, and in and of itself, establishes legal rulings. According to Sunni orthodoxy, the intellect is a tool by which the goodness and evil of things are known, as well as the incumbency of faith and of gratitude toward the Benefactor. Yet the only one who actually confers knowledge and makes things incumbent is God, the exalted, though with the intermediary of the intellect.

القَوْلُ فِي الْإِيمَانِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ

اتَّفَقَ أَهْلُ الْقِبْلَةِ عَلَى أَنَّ الْإِيمَانَ بِاللهِ تَعَالَى فَرْضٌ وَالْكُفْرَ بِهِ حَرَامٌ، وَلَكِنَّهُمُ اخْتَلَفُوا أَنَّ وُجُوبَهُ بِالْعَقْلِ أَمْ بِالسَّمْعِ، فَمَن لَمْ تَبْلُغْهُ الدَّعْوَةُ لَوْ مَاتَ عَلَى الْكُفْرِ هَلْ يُعَاقَبُ أَمْ لَا؟

ذَكَرَ الْحَاكِمُ الشَّهِيدُ فِي «الْمُنْتَقَى» عَنْ أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ لَا عُذْرَ لِأَحَدٍ فِي الْجَهْلِ بِخَالِقِهِ لِمَا يَرَى فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَفِي خَلْقِ نَفْسِهِ وَسَائِرِ الْمَخْلُوقَاتِ. وَقَالَ أَيْضًا وَلَوْ لَمْ يَبْعَثِ اللهُ تَعَالَى رَسُولًا لَوَجَبَ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ مَعْرِفَتُهُ بِعُقُولِهِمْ. وَقَالَتِ الْأَشْعَرِيَّةُ لَا يَجِبُ بِالْعَقْلِ شَيْءٌ، وَلَكِن يُعْرَفُ بِهِ حُسْنُ بَعْضِ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَقُبْحُهَا، وَيُعْرَفُ أَيْضًا حَدَثُ الْعَالَمِ وَقِدَمُ الصَّانِعِ. وَقَالَتِ الْمَلَاحِدَةُ وَالرَّوَافِضُ وَالْمُشَبِّهَةُ وَالْخَوَارِجُ الْمُحَكِّمَةُ لَا يُعْرَفُ بِهِ شَيْءٌ وَلَا يَجِبُ بِهِ شَيْءٌ.

وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ الْعَقْلُ مُوجِبٌ لِلْإِيمَانِ بِاللهِ تَعَالَى وَشُكْرِ نِعَمِهِ، وَمُثْبِتٌ لِلْأَحْكَامِ بِذَاتِهِ. وَعِنْدَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ الْعَقْلُ آلَةٌ يُعْرَفُ بِهَا حُسْنُ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَقُبْحُهَا وَوُجُوبُ الْإِيمَانِ وَشُكْرِ الْمُنْعِمِ، وَالْمُعَرِّفُ وَالْمُوجِبُ فِي الْحَقِيقَةِ هُوَ اللهُ تَعَالَى، لَكِن بِوَاسِطَةِ الْعَقْلِ.

To proceed, if a child with sound intellect is able to use logical deduction, is it an obligation on him to know God, the exalted, or not? The shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī maintains that it is an obligation. Many shaykhs of Iraq hold this opinion, while others among them state that nothing is incumbent upon him before puberty.

The evidence that the intellect alone is sufficient proof is the statement of God, the exalted, "Verily, [one's] hearing, sight, and heart—each of those will he be responsible for" (17:36). Hearing is specific to things that are heard, sight to things seen, and the heart to things understood, although neither hearing nor sight is completely independent of intellect, since hearing hears both truth and falsehood and sight sees both truth and falsehood, and the two [truth and falsehood] cannot be distinguished except by the intellect. To further clarify: The statement of a prophetic messenger is a narration of one individual, which in and of itself could be true or false, and the only way of differentiating between the two is by [the messenger's performance of] a prophetic miracle. And the faculty that distinguishes between a true prophetic miracle and a mere extraordinary act is the intellect. Hence, the focal point of all knowledge and of all obligations is in reality the intellect.

Additionally, the prophets debated their peoples specifically using logical proofs. Al-Khalīl [Abraham] ﷺ used rational arguments against the king, his father [that is, his paternal uncle] and his people, as God, the exalted, mentions in the Qur'an, "And when Abraham said to his father Āzar, 'Do you take idols as gods?'" (6:74) as well as the statement of God, the exalted, "And recite unto them the account of Abraham, when he said to his father and his people, 'What do you worship?'" (26:69–70);

ثُمَّ الصَّبِيُّ الْعَاقِلُ إِذَا كَانَ بِحَالٍ يُمْكِنُهُ الِاسْتِدْلَالُ ، هَلْ يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِ مَعْرِفَةُ اللهِ تَعَالَى أَمْ لَا ؟ قَالَ الشَّيْخُ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو مَنْصُورٍ الْمَاتُرِيدِيُّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ يَجِبُ ، وَعَلَيْهِ كَثِيرٌ مِن مَشَايِخِ الْعِرَاقِ . وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ لَا يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِ قَبْلَ الْبُلُوغِ شَيْءٌ .

وَدَلَالَةُ كَوْنِ الْعَقْلِ حُجَّةً قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ﴾ . وَالسَّمْعُ يَخْتَصُّ بِالْمَسْمُوعَاتِ ، وَالْبَصَرُ بِالْمُبْصَرَاتِ ، وَالْفُؤَادُ بِالْمَعْقُولَاتِ ، مَعَ أَنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ لَا يَسْتَغْنِيَانِ عَنِ الْعَقْلِ ، لِأَنَّ السَّمْعَ يَسْمَعُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ، وَالْبَصَرَ يُبْصِرُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ، وَلَا يُمْكِنُ التَّمْيِيزُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْعَقْلِ . يُوضِحُهُ أَنَّ قَوْلَ الرَّسُولِ خَبَرُ الْوَاحِدِ ، وَهُوَ فِي ذَاتِهِ يَحْتَمِلُ الصِّدْقَ وَالْكَذِبَ ، وَلَا يُمْكِنُ التَّمْيِيزُ إِلَّا بِالْمُعْجِزَةِ ، وَالْفَاصِلُ بَيْنَ الْمُعْجِزَةِ وَالْمُخْرِقَةِ هُوَ الْعَقْلُ . فَإِذَنْ مَدَارُ الْمَعَارِفِ وَالْمَوَاجِبِ بِالتَّحْقِيقِ عَلَى الْعَقْلِ .

وَلِأَنَّ الْأَنبِيَاءَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ نَاظَرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ بِالدَّلَائِلِ الْعَقْلِيَّةِ خَاصَّةً ، وَحَاجَّ الْخَلِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مَعَ الْمَلِكِ وَأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ ، كَمَا ذَكَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي الْقُرْآنِ ﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ ءَازَرَ أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا ءَالِهَةً ﴾ الْآيَةَ ، وَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَٱتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ۝٦٩ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِۦ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝٧٠ ﴾ ،

and the Exalted's statement "'What are these images to which you are so utterly devoted?'" (21:52). The acquisition of knowledge by these logical proofs does not depend on the statement of a messenger; rather, were they merely to reflect with their intellects, they would know it. For that reason, in many verses of the Qur'an, God, the exalted, exhorts them to think and deliberate, as He states, "Do they not reflect?" (7:184, 30:8) and "Do they not ponder?"(7:185, 50:6). And it is known that the intellect can independently ascertain rational truths, while revelation does not grant knowledge independently without the intellect.

What is meant by the incumbency of faith based on the intellect alone is not that a person deserves reward for belief or punishment for disbelief., since those consequences can be known only by revelation. Rather, according to us, it denotes a type of realization in the intellect that acknowledging the Creator is better than denying Him, and that affirming His oneness is more appropriate than ascribing a partner to Him, with the result that the intellect does not judge the two to be equivalent; likewise, [realizing that] gratitude entails ascribing blessings solely to the giver of blessings, such that the individual knows that none besides Him shares in His role of giving. And God alone is the One who enables.

ON THE REALITY OF FAITH

The People of Hadith state that faith is verbal affirmation, belief in the heart, and action with one's limbs. Many of our fellow Māturīdīs state that faith is only [verbal] affirmation and [internal] belief. The Karrāmiyyah state that faith is merely affirmation. Jahm b. Ṣafwān and al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣāliḥī[2] [d. 168/785] of the Qadarites state that faith is but knowledge. The expert theologians among our fellow Māturīdīs state that

وَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ مَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلتَّمَاثِيلُ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنتُمْ لَهَا عَٰكِفُونَ ﴾ . وَحُصُولُ الْعِلْمِ بِتِلْكَ الدَّلَائِلِ لَا يَتَوَقَّفُ عَلَى قَوْلِ الرَّسُولِ ، بَل لَوْ تَفَكَّرُوا بِعُقُولِهِمْ عَلِمُوا ذَلِكَ . وَلِهَذَا حَثَّهُمُ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى النَّظَرِ وَالتَّفَكُّرِ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ الْقُرْآنِ كَمَا قَالَ ﴿ أَوَ لَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُواْ ﴾ ، ﴿ أَوَلَمْ يَنظُرُواْ ﴾ ، وَعُلِمَ أَنَّ الْعَقْلَ يَسْتَبِدُّ بِمَعْرِفَةِ الْمَعْقُولَاتِ ، وَالسَّمْعَ لَا يَسْتَبِدُّ بِدُونِ الْعَقْلِ .

وَلَيْسَ تَفْسِيرُ وُجُوبِ الْإِيمَانِ بِالْعَقْلِ أَن يَسْتَحِقَّ الثَّوَابَ بِفِعْلِهِ أَوِ الْعِقَابَ بِتَرْكِهِ ، إِذْ هُمَا لَا يُعْرَفَانِ إِلَّا بِالسَّمْعِ ، وَلَكِنْ تَفْسِيرُهُ عِنْدَنَا نَوْعُ تَرْجِيحٍ فِي الْعَقْلِ أَنَّ الْاِعْتِرَافَ بِالصَّانِعِ أَوْلَى مِنْ إِنْكَارِهِ ، وَتَوْحِيدَهُ أَوْلَى مِنْ إِشْرَاكِ غَيْرِهِ مَعَهُ ، بِحَيْثُ لَا يَحْكُمُ الْعَقْلُ أَنَّهُمَا بِمَنْزِلَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ . وَكَذَا الشُّكْرُ إِظْهَارُ النِّعْمَةِ مِنَ الْمُنْعِمِ ، بِحَيْثُ يَعْرِفُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُشْرِكُهُ فِيهِ أَحَدٌ . وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي حَقِيقَةِ الْإِيمَانِ

قَالَ أَهْلُ الْحَدِيثِ الْإِيمَانُ هُوَ الْإِقْرَارُ بِاللِّسَانِ وَالتَّصْدِيقُ بِالْجَنَانِ وَالْعَمَلُ بِالْأَرْكَانِ . وَقَالَ كَثِيرٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا الْإِيمَانُ هُوَ الْإِقْرَارُ وَالتَّصْدِيقُ . وَقَالَتِ الْكَرَّامِيَّةُ الْإِيمَانُ هُوَ الْإِقْرَارُ الْمُجَرَّدُ . وَقَالَ جَهْمُ بْنُ صَفْوَانَ وَالْحُسَيْنُ الصَّالِحِيُّ مِنَ الْقَدَرِيَّةِ الْإِيمَانُ هُوَ الْمَعْرِفَةُ . وَقَالَ الْمُحَقِّقُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا

[the essence of] faith is only belief in the heart, while verbal affirmation is a condition for carrying out legal rulings in this life; Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ [himself] explicitly states this in his work *Al-ʿĀlim wa al-mutaʿallim* (*The scholar and the student*), and it is the position of the shaykh Imam Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl al-Bajalī[3] [d. 282/895], as well as the more sound narration of [Imam] al-Ashʿarī.

The basis of this view is that linguistically, *faith* (*īmān*) means "to believe" (*taṣdīq*); God, the exalted, states, quoting the brethren of Joseph ﷺ, "Yet you do not have faith in us" (12:17)—that is, "believe us." However, because belief is an internal phenomenon upon which legal rulings cannot be based, the sacred law mandated verbal affirmation as an indication of belief, and [hence] as a condition for carrying out legal rulings, just as the Prophet ﷺ said, "I was commanded to fight [certain Arab polytheistic] people[4] until they say, 'There is no deity but God'; once they affirm this, they have safeguarded from me their lives and their property, except for just cause. Their final account, however, is with God."[5] For that reason, one affirmation is sufficient for a lifetime.

Acts, then, are not part of faith [that is, not of its essence/quiddity, but only of its fruits and illumination]. For indeed, God, the exalted, conjoined the two in His statement "Verily, those who have faith *and* act righteously" (2:277), and [when the conjunction *and* is used in Arabic,] that which is conjoined [here, "act righteously"] differs from what it is conjoined to ["have faith"]. Also, faith is a condition for the validity of acts, as God, the exalted, states, "And whoever acts righteously *as a believer*" (20:112), and a condition differs from what it is a condition for.

إِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ هُوَ التَّصْدِيقُ بِالْقَلْبِ وَالْإِقْرَارُ شَرْطُ إِجْرَاءِ الْأَحْكَامِ فِي الدُّنْيَا . نَصَّ عَلَيْهِ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ فِي كِتَابِ « الْعَالِمُ وَالْمُتَعَلِّمُ » ، وَهُوَ اخْتِيَارُ الشَّيْخِ الْإِمَامِ أَبِي مَنْصُورٍ الْمَاتُرِيدِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ وَالْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ الْفَضْلِ الْبَجَلِيِّ وَأَصَحُّ الرِّوَايَتَيْنِ عَنِ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ .

وَذَلِكَ لِأَنَّ الْإِيمَانَ فِي اللُّغَةِ هُوَ التَّصْدِيقُ ، قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى خَبَرًا عَنْ إِخْوَةِ يُوسُفَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ﴿ وَمَآ أَنتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا ﴾ أَيْ بِمُصَدِّقٍ لَنَا . إِلَّا أَنَّ التَّصْدِيقَ لَمَّا كَانَ أَمْرًا بَاطِنًا لَا يُمْكِنُ بِنَاءُ الْأَحْكَامِ عَلَيْهِ ، فَأَوْجَبَ الشَّرْعُ الْإِقْرَارَ أَمَارَةً عَلَى التَّصْدِيقِ وَشَرْطًا لِإِجْرَاءِ الْأَحْكَامِ ، كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ « أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ ، فَإِذَا قَالُوهَا عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا ، وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللهِ » ، وَلِهَذَا يَكْفِي فِي الْعُمْرِ مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً .

وَالْأَعْمَالُ لَيْسَتْ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى عَطَفَ الْأَعْمَالَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ بِقَوْلِهِ ﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ ﴾ ، وَالْمَعْطُوفُ غَيْرُ الْمَعْطُوفِ عَلَيْهِ . وَكَذَا الْإِيمَانُ شَرْطٌ لِصِحَّةِ الْأَعْمَالِ ، كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ ﴾ ، وَالشَّرْطُ غَيْرُ الْمَشْرُوطِ .

Lastly, verbal affirmation means to inform of one's internal belief, for if someone says, "I have faith," yet belief did not exist in his heart, he would not be truthful in his statement. For that reason, God, the exalted, denies the faith of hypocrites despite their verbal affirmation of faith, with the statement of God, the exalted, "The desert Arabs say, 'We have faith.' Say: 'You do not have faith'" (49:14).

So whoever verbally pronounces faith yet in his heart does not believe is a believer in our estimation [that is, he is dealt with as such by the community at large] but a disbeliever according to God, the exalted, and whoever believes in his heart yet without verbal affirmation[6] is a believer according to God but a disbeliever with respect to legal rulings in this life. And God alone is the One who safeguards.

ON THE FAITH OF ONE WHO MERELY EMULATES

The People of the Qiblah [Muslims] have differed on the validity of the faith of one who believes out of mere emulation [without any personal reflection or reasoning]. Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān al-Thawrī[7] [d. 161/778], Mālik,[8] al-Awzāʿī[9] [d. 157/774], most jurists and People of Hadith—may God have mercy on them all—maintain that his faith is valid but that he is disobedient for not basing it on [some level of] logical proof [if capable of that].[10] Al-Rustughfanī[11] [d. 345/956] and al-Ḥalīmī[12] [d. 403/1012] ﷺ state that the condition for the validity of faith is for one to know the truthfulness of the Messenger's statement based on the signification of prophetic miracles, while according to al-Ashʿarī, [the condition is] for one to know it based on the reasoning of one's intellect.[13] It is not a condition, however, for one to verbally articulate that or to debate one's opponent; this is the position of most theologians. The Muʿtazilites state that, so long as one does not know every theological issue based on the intellect [alone], in a manner by which he is able to refute doubt or error, he is not a believer.

ثُمَّ الْإِقْرَارُ إِخْبَارٌ عَنِ التَّصْدِيقِ بِالْقَلْبِ ، فَإِذَا قَالَ آمَنْتُ ، فَمَا لَمْ يَكُنِ التَّصْدِيقُ قَائِمًا بِالْقَلْبِ لَا يَكُونُ صَادِقًا فِي الْإِخْبَارِ ، وَلِهَذَا نَفَى اللهُ تَعَالَى الْإِيمَانَ عَنِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ مَعَ إِقْرَارِهِمْ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ قَالَتِ ٱلْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّاۖ قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُواْ ﴾ .

فَمَنْ أَقَرَّ وَلَمْ يُصَدِّقْ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا عِنْدَنَا كَافِرًا عِنْدَ اللهِ تَعَالَى ، وَمَنْ صَدَّقَ وَلَمْ يُقِرَّ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا عِنْدَ اللهِ كَافِرًا فِي أَحْكَامِ الدُّنْيَا . وَاللهُ الْعَاصِمُ .

الْقَوْلُ فِي إِيمَانِ الْمُقَلِّدِ

اخْتَلَفَ أَهْلُ الْقِبْلَةِ فِي صِحَّةِ إِيمَانِ الْمُقَلِّدِ . قَالَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ وَسُفْيَانُ الثَّوْرِيُّ وَمَالِكٌ وَالْأَوْزَاعِيُّ وَعَامَّةُ الْفُقَهَاءِ وَأَهْلُ الْحَدِيثِ رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ صَحَّ إِيمَانُهُ وَلَكِنَّهُ عَاصٍ بِتَرْكِ الْاِسْتِدْلَالِ . وَقَالَ الرُّسْتُغْفَنِيُّ وَالْحَلِيمِيُّ رَحِمَهُمَا اللهُ شَرْطُ صِحَّةِ الْإِيمَانِ أَن يَعْرِفَ صِحَّةَ قَوْلِ الرَّسُولِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِدَلَالَةِ الْمُعْجِزَةِ ، وَعِنْدَ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ أَن يَعْرِفَ ذَلِكَ بِدَلَالَةِ الْعَقْلِ ، وَلَيْسَ الشَّرْطُ أَن يُعَبِّرَ عَنْهُ بِلِسَانِهِ وَيُجَادِلَ خَصْمَهُ ، وَهُوَ قَوْلُ عَامَّةِ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ . وَقَالَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ مَا لَمْ يَعْرِفْ كُلَّ مَسْأَلَةٍ بِدَلَالَةِ الْعَقْلِ عَلَى وَجْهٍ يُمْكِنُهُ دَفْعُ الشُّبْهَةِ لَا يَكُونُ مُؤْمِنًا .

The correct position is that of the majority of scholars, because faith is merely belief, without qualification, for it is valid to say regarding someone informed [of something] by a narration who then believes it, "He has faith in it" or "He has faith regarding it." So if the mere emulator is informed of the necessary tenets of faith and believes in them, he is indeed a believer and is deserving of what God, the exalted, has promised believers.[14]

Knowledge alone, however, is different from faith, since it can be separated from it, for the People of the Book knew [the truth of] the prophecy of Muḥammad ﷺ just as they knew their own children, yet they did not believe, as the Book explains [see 2:146].

This difference of opinion pertains only to one who grew up on the peak of a high mountain [that is, away from society], without having ever reflected on the universe or on its creator in the first place, and is then informed thereof and believes. As for one who is raised in Muslim lands and glorifies God, the exalted, upon seeing His creation, he is outside the scope of "mere emulation."[15] And enablement is by God alone.

ON WHETHER OR NOT FAITH INCREASES

Once it is established that faith is belief [alone], while verbal affirmation is [not faith itself but] a condition for carrying out legal rulings, then if belief exists, faith obtains; thus, it is not possible for it to increase or decrease. This is contrary to the view of al-Shāfiʿī, who deemed works to be a part of faith and hence stated that faith increases with an increase in spiritual works and decreases with their decrease; yet we have already shown the falsehood of this position. So the statement of God, the exalted, "And their faith increased" (8:2) can have more than one meaning.

وَالصَّحِيحُ مَا عَلَيْهِ عَامَّةُ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ ، فَإِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ هُوَ التَّصْدِيقُ مُطْلَقًا ، كَمَنْ أُخْبِرَ بِخَبَرٍ فَصَدَّقَهُ صَحَّ أَن يُقَالَ آمَنَ بِهِ وآمَنَ لَهُ ، فَإِذَا أُخْبِرَ الْمُقَلِّدُ بِمَا يَجِبُ الْإِيمَانُ بِهِ فَصَدَّقَهُ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا ، وَيَسْتَحِقُّ مَا وَعَدَ اللهُ تَعَالَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ .

وَالْمَعْرِفَةُ غَيْرُ الْإِيمَانِ بِدَلِيلِ أَنَّهَا تَنْفَكُّ عَنْهُ ، فَإِنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ يَعْرِفُونَ نُبُوَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ، وَلَا يُصَدِّقُونَ ، كَمَا نَطَقَ بِهِ الْكِتَابُ .

وَهَذَا الْخِلَافُ فِيمَن نَشَأَ عَلَى شَاهِقِ جَبَلٍ وَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرْ فِي الْعَالَمِ وَلَا فِي الصَّانِعِ أَصْلًا ، فَأُخْبِرَ بِذَلِكَ وَصَدَّقَهُ . فَأَمَّا مَن نَشَأَ فِي بِلَادِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَسَبَّحَ اللهَ تَعَالَى عِنْدَ رُؤْيَةِ صَنَائِعِهِ فَهُوَ خَارِجٌ عَنْ حَدِّ التَّقْلِيدِ . وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ .

فَصْلٌ

وَإِذَا ثَبَتَ أَنَّ الْإِيمَانَ هُوَ التَّصْدِيقُ وَالْإِقْرَارَ شَرْطُ إِجْرَاءِ الْأَحْكَامِ ، فَإِذَا وُجِدَ التَّصْدِيقُ حَصَلَ الْإِيمَانُ وَلَا يُتَصَوَّرُ فِيهِ الزِّيَادَةُ وَالنُّقْصَانُ ، خِلَافًا لِلشَّافِعِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ الْأَعْمَالَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ فَيَقُولُ بِزِيَادَةِ الْإِيمَانِ عِنْدَ زِيَادَةِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَبِنُقْصَانِهِ حِينَ تَنْقُصُ ، وَقَدْ أَبْطَلْنَاهُ . وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَٰنًا ﴾ مُحْتَمِلٌ ، يَحْتَمِلُ الزِّيَادَةَ مِنْ حَيْثُ التَّفْصِيلُ فِي عَصْرِ

For example, it could refer to the increase of "details to believe in" during the era of the Prophet ﷺ, since at each time period [of revelation], a new verse would descend and a new legal ruling would thus take effect, whereby they were obliged to have faith in it as a new particular, even though it was already encompassed in their overall belief as a universal. It could also refer to increase with regard to "replication of likenesses," as with all accidents.[16] Or, it could refer to the increase of "the fruits of faith and illumination of its light." And God knows best.

To proceed, someone who has both internal belief and verbal affirmation is an actual believer, so contrary to the view of al-Shāfiʿī, it is not permissible for him to say, "I am a believer, if God wills." This is because an exception [that is, qualification or condition] in faith entails doubt, or could entail that, just as one who is alive [for example] cannot say, "I am alive, if God wills."

Also, because such a person currently possesses faith, he is a believer according to God, the exalted, even if God, the exalted, knows that the person will later disbelieve, just as He, the exalted, knows that a living person is alive due to his currently possessing life, even if He knows that the person will die afterwards. [This is true] to the extent that we maintain that Iblīs was a believer and [apparently] destined to felicity (*saʿīd*) when he used to worship God, the exalted, even though God, the exalted, knew that he would later disbelieve. And, regarding the Exalted's statement "And he *was* of the disbelievers" (2:34), God, the exalted, meant that he *came to be* among the disbelievers, just as God, the exalted, states regarding the son of Noah ﷺ, "So he *was* of those who drowned" (11:43)—that is, he *came to be* among them.

To proceed, according to us yet contrary to the literalists (*aṣḥāb al-ẓawāhir*), faith (*īmān*) and submission (*islām*) are one [that is, inseparable]. This is because faith is belief in God, the exalted, with respect to His commands and prohibitions that He informs [us] of, while submission is acquiescence and humble surrender to His divinity, which is actualized only by acceptance

النَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، حَيْثُ تَنْزِلُ فِي كُلِّ وَقْتٍ آيَةٌ وَيَتَجَدَّدُ فِي كُلِّ وَقْتٍ حُكْمٌ، فَيَلْزَمُهُمُ الْإِيمَانُ بِهِ مِنْ حَيْثُ التَّفْصِيلُ وَإِنْ كَانَ دَاخِلًا فِي الْجُمْلَةِ؛ وَيَحْتَمِلُ الزِّيَادَةَ مِنْ حَيْثُ تَجَدُّدُ الْأَمْثَالِ كَمَا فِي سَائِرِ الْأَعْرَاضِ؛ أَوْ زِيَادَةَ ثَمَرَةِ الْإِيمَانِ وَإِشْرَاقِ نُورِهِ. وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ.

ثُمَّ مَنْ قَامَ بِهِ التَّصْدِيقُ وَالْإِقْرَارُ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ حَقًّا، فَلَا يَجُوزُ أَن يَقُولَ أَنَا مُؤْمِنٌ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ، خِلَافًا لِلشَّافِعِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ، فَإِنَّ الْاِسْتِثْنَاءَ فِي الْإِيمَانِ يَقْتَضِي الشَّكَّ أَوْ يَحْتَمِلُ ذَلِكَ، كَمَنْ قَامَتْ بِهِ الْحَيَاةُ لَا يَجُوزُ أَن يَقُولَ أَنَا حَيٌّ إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ.

وَكَذَا يَكُونُ مُؤْمِنًا عِنْدَ اللهِ تَعَالَى لِقِيَامِ الْإِيمَانِ بِهِ فِي الْحَالِ وَإِنْ عَلِمَ اللهُ تَعَالَى مِنْهُ أَنَّهُ يَكْفُرُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ، كَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَعَالَى الْحَيَّ حَيًّا لِقِيَامِ الْحَيَاةِ بِهِ فِي الْحَالِ وَإِنْ عَلِمَ أَنَّهُ يَمُوتُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ؛ حَتَّى قُلْنَا إِنَّ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا وَسَعِيدًا حِينَ كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اللهَ تَعَالَى وَإِنْ عَلِمَ اللهُ تَعَالَى أَنَّهُ يَكْفُرُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ. وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴾ أَرَادَ أَنَّهُ صَارَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ كَمَا قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى فِي ابْنِ نُوحٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ﴿ فَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُغْرَقِينَ ﴾ أَيْ صَارَ.

ثُمَّ الْإِيمَانُ وَالْإِسْلَامُ وَاحِدٌ عِنْدَنَا، خِلَافًا لِأَصْحَابِ الظَّوَاهِرِ. وَذَلِكَ لِأَنَّ الْإِيمَانَ تَصْدِيقُ اللهِ تَعَالَى فِيمَا أَخْبَرَ مِنْ أَوَامِرِهِ وَنَوَاهِيهِ، وَالْإِسْلَامَ هُوَ الْاِنْقِيَادُ وَالْخُضُوعُ لِأُلُوهِيَّتِهِ، وَذَا لَا يَتَحَقَّقُ إِلَّا بِقَبُولِ الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ.

of His commands and prohibitions.[17] Therefore, effectively, faith is not separable from submission, so they are not different. One who asserts their difference is asked, "What is the ruling regarding someone who has faith yet does not submit or submits yet without having faith?" If he affirms a ruling for either one that does not apply to the other [then hypothetically he would have proven his position's validity, but that is impossible as no such ruling exists]; otherwise, the falsehood of his position is made clear. And God alone is the One who enables.

ON NECESSARY TENETS OF FAITH DEDUCED FROM REVELATION

We state that whatever comes in revelation and is logically possible must be accepted and affirmed in faith,[18] such as the questioning after death and the torment of the grave. According to us yet contrary to the Mu'tazilites, they are affirmed realities, as they are possible by the return of the soul to the body. Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ said after burying the dead, "Seek forgiveness for your brother, for indeed he is right now being questioned."[19] He also said, "Be careful to avoid any traces of urine, for verily most of the torment of the tomb is due to it."[20]

Similarly, the resurrection of bodies and restoration of life in them on the Day of Arising are affirmed realities; the atheists reject this altogether, while some of the philosophers claim that resurrection is of souls alone, not of bodies. This [tenet of ours] is also possible by restoring the body's original form after its transformation, and then returning the soul to it. Indeed, God, the exalted, states, "Verily, that God will resurrect all those who are in graves" (22:7). Likewise, He states—in response to the one who says, "Who will give life to bones, being decayed?"—"Say: The One who created them the first time will give them life again" (36:78–79).

فَالْإِيمَانُ لَا يَنْفَكُّ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ حُكْمًا ، فَلَا يَتَغَايَرَانِ . وَمَنْ أَثْبَتَ التَّغَايُرَ يُقَالُ لَهُ مَا حُكْمُ مَنْ آمَنَ وَلَمْ يُسْلِمْ ، أَوْ أَسْلَمَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ ؟ فَإِنْ أَثْبَتَ لِأَحَدِهِمَا حُكْمًا لَيْسَ بِثَابِتٍ

لِلْآخَرِ ، وَإِلَّا ظَهَرَ بُطْلَانُ قَوْلِهِ. وَاللهُ الْمُوَفِّقُ.

الْقَوْلُ فِيمَا وَجَبَ الْإِيمَانُ بِهِ بِالسَّمْعِ

نَقُولُ مَا يُتَصَوَّرُ فِي الْعَقْلِ وُجُودُهُ إِذَا وَرَدَ السَّمْعُ بِهِ يَجِبُ قَبُولُهُ وَالْإِيمَانُ بِهِ . فَمِنْ ذَلِكَ السُّؤَالُ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَذَابُ فِي الْقَبْرِ ، حَقٌّ ثَابِتٌ عِنْدَنَا خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ . وَذَلِكَ مُمْكِنٌ بِإِعَادَةِ الرُّوحِ إِلَى الْجَسَدِ . وَقَدْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعْدَ دَفْنِ الْمَيِّتِ « اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ يُسْأَلُ » ، وَقَالَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ « اسْتَنْزِهُوا مِنَ الْبَوْلِ فَإِنَّ عَامَّةَ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ مِنْهُ » .

وَكَذَا بَعْثُ الْأَجْسَادِ وَإِحْيَاؤُهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَقٌّ ثَابِتٌ . وَأَنْكَرَتْهُ الدَّهْرِيَّةُ أَصْلًا ، وَزَعَمَ بَعْضُ الْفَلَاسِفَةِ أَنَّ الْحَشْرَ لِلْأَرْوَاحِ دُونَ الْأَجْسَادِ . وَهُوَ مُمْكِنٌ أَيْضًا بِإِعَادَةِ الْهَيْئَةِ الْأُولَى فِي الْجِسْمِ بَعْدَ تَغَيُّرِهِ ، وَإِعَادَةِ الرُّوحِ إِلَيْهِ . وَقَدْ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَن فِى ٱلْقُبُورِ ﴾ ، وَكَذَا قَالَ فِي جَوَابِ مَن يَقُولُ ﴿ مَن يُحْيِ ٱلْعِظَٰمَ وَهِىَ رَمِيمٌ ﴾ ، ﴿ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ﴾ .

Similarly, the reading of scrolls on Resurrection Day is a reality, due to the statement of God, the exalted, "And We will bring forth for him, on the Day of Arising, a book that he will receive, spread forth" (17:13). The scrolls of believers are placed in their right hands, and those of disbelievers in their left hands yet behind their backs, as the Qur'an states [see 17:71, 69:19–26, 84:7–10].

Similarly, the scales are a reality, due to the statement of God, the exalted, "And the scale, which is perfectly just, is on that Day" (7:8). It is an expression of something by which the value of deeds will be known, yet the intellect is unable to grasp its modality. One should not make an analogy with scales in this life, so submission in this matter is safest. Similarly, the traverse is a reality; it is a bridge outstretched over the top of the inferno, upon which creatures shall cross—the people of paradise will pass over it, while the feet of denizens of the fire will slip off.

Paradise and the fire exist now according to us yet contrary to the Mu'tazilites, due to the statement of God, the exalted, regarding paradise, "Prepared for the devout" (3:133), and regarding the fire, "Prepared for disbelievers" (2:24, 3:131). According to us yet contrary to the Jahmiyyah, neither of the two shall ever perish, nor their inhabitants, due to the statement of God, the exalted, regarding both groups, "Residing therein, forever" (4:57, 4:122, 4:169, 33:65).

Similarly, that of which God, the exalted, informs us regarding the delights of the people of paradise (including maidens [*ḥūr*], palaces, fruits, rivers, trees, and myriad types of food and drink) and regarding the punishment of the denizens of the fire (including its infernal tree [*zaqqūm*], boiling water, shackles, chains, and fetters), all are affirmed [literal] realities, as opposed to the claims of the esoterists and philosophers, who interpret the above contrary to its outward meaning. This, however, entails

وَكَذَا قِرَاءَةُ الْكُتُبِ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ حَقٌّ ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُۥ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ كِتَٰبًا يَلْقَىٰهُ مَنشُورًا ﴾ . وَيُعْطَى كِتَابُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ وَكِتَابُ الْكَافِرِينَ بِشَمَائِلِهِمْ وَوَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ ، كَمَا نَطَقَ بِهِ الْقُرْآنُ .

وَكَذَا الْمِيزَانُ حَقٌّ ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَٱلْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ ٱلْحَقُّ ﴾ الْآيَةَ . وَهُوَ عِبَارَةٌ عَمَّا يُعْرَفُ بِهِ مَقَادِيرُ الْأَعْمَالِ ، وَالْعَقْلُ قَاصِرٌ عَن بُلُوغِ مَعْرِفَةِ كَيْفِيَّتِهِ ، وَلَا يُقَاسُ عَلَى الْمَوَازِينِ الدُّنْيَوِيَّةِ ، فَالتَّسْلِيمُ فِيهِ أَسْلَمُ . وَكَذَا الصِّرَاطُ حَقٌّ ، وَهُوَ جِسْرٌ مَمْدُودٌ عَلَى مَتْنِ جَهَنَّمَ ، تَمُرُّ عَلَيْهِ الْخَلَائِقُ ، فَيَجُوزُهُ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ وَتَزِلُّ بِهِ أَقْدَامُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ .

وَالْجَنَّةُ وَالنَّارُ مَخْلُوقَتَانِ الْيَوْمَ عِنْدَنَا ، خِلَافًا لِلْمُعْتَزِلَةِ ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى لِلْجَنَّةِ ﴿ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾ ، وَلِلنَّارِ ﴿ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴾ . وَلَا فَنَاءَ لَهُمَا مَعَ أَهَالِيهِمَا أَبَدًا عِنْدَنَا ، خِلَافًا لِلْجَهْمِيَّةِ ، لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى فِي حَقِّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ ﴿ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ﴾ .

وَكَذَا مَا أَخْبَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ مِن نَعِيمِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ مِنَ الْحُورِ وَالْقُصُورِ وَالْأَثْمَارِ وَالْأَنْهَارِ وَالْأَشْجَارِ وَالْأَطْعِمَةِ وَالْأَشْرِبَةِ ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ مِنَ الزَّقُّومِ وَالْحَمِيمِ وَالْأَغْلَالِ وَالْأَنْكَالِ وَالسَّلَاسِلِ ، حَقٌّ ثَابِتٌ ، خِلَافًا لِمَا يَقُولُهُ الْبَاطِنِيَّةُ وَالْفَلَاسِفَةُ ، وَيُؤَوِّلُ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا عَلَى خِلَافِ ظَاهِرِهِ ، وَإِنَّهُ

abandoning the outward meanings of texts without necessity or evidence, which is absolute heresy (*ilḥād maḥḍ*).

Similarly, the beatific vision (*ru'yah*) of God, the exalted, for the believers on the Day of Arising, with their very eyes, is an affirmed reality, as we established earlier. May God, the exalted, honor us with it in the final abode, along with everlasting pleasure; may He give us refuge from the punishment of the blaze, and make us steadfast in this life upon the straight path. Verily, He is ever-generous, kind, gracious, and compassionate.

عُدُولٌ عَنْ ظَوَاهِرِ النُّصُوصِ مِنْ غَيْرِ ضَرُورَةٍ وَلَا دَلِيلٍ ، وَهُوَ إِلْحَادٌ مَحْضٌ .

وَكَذَا رُؤْيَةُ اللهِ تَعَالَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِالْأَبْصَارِ حَقٌّ ثَابِتٌ، عَلَى مَا قَرَّرْنَا قَبْلَ هَذَا . أَكْرَمَنَا اللهُ تَعَالَى بِهَا فِي الْعُقْبَى مَعَ النَّعِيمِ الْمُقِيمِ، وَأَعَاذَنَا مِنْ عَذَابِ الْجَحِيمِ، وَثَبَّتَنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ، إِنَّهُ جَوَّادٌ كَرِيمٌ بَرٌّ رَحِيمٌ .

Annotations to *Faith, Belief, and the Intellect*

1 He is Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Marwazī al-Sulamī al-Balkhī, better known as al-Ḥākim al-Shahīd. He was a judge and minister, eminent scholar of Merv, and imam of the Hanafi school practioners in his era. He authored the work *Al-Muntaqā* in Hanafi jurisprudence. He was martyred in Rayy in the year 334/945. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 7:19.

2 All manuscripts of *Al-Bidāyah* have his name as al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣāliḥī, as does *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*. Yet in biographical works, there is mention of the name al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ. [BT]

He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy al-Hamadānī al-Thawrī al-Kūfī, one of the leaders of the Batriyyah sect among the Zaidis. He was a mujtahid jurist, theologian, and a reliable narrator of hadith. A contemporary of Sufyān al-Thawrī, he was heavily criticized by a group of scholars for advocating rebellion against unjust rulers. He died in the year 168/785. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:193.

3 He is al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faḍl b. ʿUmayr al-Bajalī, renowned Qur'anic exegete. Originally from Kufa, he later moved to Nishapur and taught there for sixty-five years. He died in the year 282/895. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:251–52.

4 The word *people* in this particular hadith does not refer to all people but is specified and restricted. According to Imam Abū

Ḥanīfah, it refers only to the Arab polytheists at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and according to Imam Mālik, it refers only to the tribe of Quraysh among them. See Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Khalaf Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 10 vols. (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, n.d.), 5:329.

Indeed, jihad is perhaps the most misunderstood teaching of Islam today. While it is often caricatured as "Islamic holy war against infidels," its true meaning is defensive, for it entails combat against aggressors seeking to undermine the safety and security of Muslim lands. With respect to "offensive jihad" mentioned in classical works of Islamic law, scholars such as Sherman Jackson have argued that the context of that ruling indicates that it too was essentially defensive since it pertained to the premodern situation of a "perennial state of war" among empires, and as such served as a means of "preserving the physical integrity of the Muslim community." Yet the twentieth century has brought forth several treaties and covenants (for example, via the United Nations) that grant inviolability to the territory of every nation, which if adhered to on the ground, creates a paradigm shift from "state of war" to "state of peace," whereby offensive jihad is no longer applicable. For a detailed discussion, see Sherman Jackson, "Jihad and the Modern World," in *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, ed. John J. Donahue and John L. Esposito, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 394–408.

This is echoed in various classical articulations of jihad in Islam. For example, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) comments in his *Majmūʿ al-fatāwā*, "Islamic warfare is always defensive, because the basis of relationships with the non-Muslims is peaceful coexistence (*musālamah*); if one reflects deeply on the causes of the Prophet's military expeditions, one will find that all of them were of this type." See Hamza Yusuf, "Understanding Jihad," in *The Creed of Imam al-Ṭaḥāwī* (Hayward, CA: Zaytuna Institute, 2007), 92.

For a detailed discussion on the regulations and limits of warfare in Islam, see Suheil Laher, "Indiscriminate Killing in Light of Islamic Sacred Texts," in *The State We Are In: Identity, Terror and the Law of Jihad*, ed. Aftab Ahmad Malik (Bristol, UK: Amal Press, 2008), 41–54. This essay presents ample evidence from the Qur'an and prophetic teaching (sunnah) of Islam's absolute condemnation of wanton destruction and indiscriminate killing, and how even during war, noncombatants such as women, children, and civilians may not be harmed. For a detailed discussion on how jihad does not constitute a "perpetual holy war," see David Dakake, "The Myth of a Militant Islam" (Malik, 55–92). The author also clarifies gross misunderstandings of Islamic scripture that portray Islam as an inherently violent faith and shows how Islam's sacred texts strongly encourage peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims. For a detailed presentation of how the Qur'an and hadith categorically prohibit terrorism and the harming of civilians, see Muhammad Afifi al-Akiti, "Defending the Transgressed by Censuring the Reckless Against the Killiṇg of Civilians" (Malik, 104–34). This is a formal legal verdict (*fatwā*) by a recognized scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, written as a scholarly rebuttal against those misguided Muslims who perpetrate terrorism in the name of Islam. On the same issue, see also the essay by Zaid Shakir, "The Deeper Implications of Muslims Targeting Civilians," *Where I'm Coming From: The Year in Review* (Antioch, CA: NID Publishers, 2010), 45–51. For one of the most comprehensive and thorough compendiums on jihad and Islam's relation to the "other," see HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, Ibrahim Kalin, and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, eds., *War and Peace in Islam: The Uses and Abuses of Jihad* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2013). And for an authoritative work on how Islam historically spread peacefully through missionary activity rather than "by the sword," see Thomas Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World: A History of Peaceful Preaching* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2008).

5 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 1:75; Usmani, *Fatḥ al-Mulhim*, 1:380.

6 This particular ruling, that genuine internal belief without verbal affirmation is sufficient for one to be a believer according to God, assumes that such a person was not asked to affirm faith, since refusal to do so itself entails disbelief. (An exception is in cases of severe coercion, details of which are found in texts on Islamic jurisprudence.) See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 116.

7 He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh Sufyān b. Saʿīd b. Masrūq al-Thawrī, leader of the faithful (*amīr al-mu'minīn*) in the science of hadith, and the master (*sayyid*) of his era in the religious sciences and in piety. He was a sign of God (*āyah*) with respect to his ability to memorize; he once said, "Once I committed something to memory, I never forgot it." His books include *Al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr* and *Al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr*, both in hadith, and a work on inheritance law. He died in the year 161/778. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 3:104–5.

8 He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh Mālik b. Anas b. Mālik al-Aṣbaḥī al-Ḥimyarī, the head scholar of the abode of emigration (*imām dār al-hijrah*), one of the four eponyms of the Sunni legal schools, and a steadfast pillar in his religious practice. He authored seminal books in hadith and law, most notably *Al-Muwaṭṭa'*. He died in the year 179/795. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 5:257–58.

9 He is Abū ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAmr b. Yuḥmid al-Awzāʿī, from the tribe of Awzāʿ, imam of the Levant in jurisprudence and in asceticism. Ṣāliḥ b. Yaḥyā (d. 850/1446) wrote in *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, "[Imam] al-Awzāʿī was of tremendous rank in the Levant; the people there deemed him more noble than even the sultan." It is estimated that he was asked seventy thousand questions on law and answered all of them. Author of the legal works *Al-Sunan* and *Al-Masā'il*, he died in the year 157/774. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 3:320.

10 Yet the very least level of deduction fulfills this requirement, whereby one is not sinful, as the author himself says at the end of this section, "As for one who is raised in Muslim lands and glorifies God, the exalted, upon seeing His creation, he is outside the scope of mere emulation." That is, to merely marvel at creation and then glorify God, the exalted, is sufficient as logical proof of His existence, due to the implicit inference entailed.

11 He is Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Saʿīd al-Rustughfanī, Hanafi jurist from Samarqand, his name being an ascription to one of its towns. He was one of the companions of Imam al-Māturīdī. An author of works on various religious sciences, he died around the year 345/956. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 4:291.

12 He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥalīm al-Bukhārī al-Jurjānī, Shafi'i jurist and judge, who wrote *Al-Minhāj fī shuʿab al-īmān*, a legal work noted for its unique merit. Deemed the leading scholar of the People of Hadith in Transoxania, he died in the year 403/1012. See al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, 2:235.

13 The correct position according to the Ashʿarī school corresponds to the opinion of the majority of jurists cited first—namely, that the faith of one who merely emulates is valid, yet such a person is in disobedience for not basing his faith on some level of inference, if capable of that. Also, with respect to the view that such a person's faith is invalid, the Ashʿarī scholar Imam al-Ṣāwī names the Mu'tazilite Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933) as its proponent, while adding, "And its ascription to Sunni orthodoxy (*ahl al-sunnah*) is false." Finally, even the Mu'tazilite opinion of invalidity pertains only to the hereafter, since Sunnis and Mu'tazilites concur that one who merely emulates is by no means anathematized from Islam, since God, the exalted, states, "And say not to one who greets you with peace, 'You are not a believer'" (4:94). See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 94; al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 108–11.

14 Imam al-Māturīdī states, "Our fellow theologians are in unanimous agreement that the general laity of Muslims are believers who know their Lord and are what paradise is 'stuffed with' (*ḥashw al-jannah*), as is related in prophetic traditions and as is attested to by scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*). For indeed, their primordial natures (*fiṭratahum*) are predisposed to affirm the oneness and eternality of the Creator, along with the temporality and dependence of all else—even if they are unable to express it in the nomenclature of scholastic theologians" (al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 96).

15 Yet the Ashʿarī scholar Imam al-Bājūrī notes, "The stronger position is that this difference of opinion applies to both residents of cities/villages and those who grow up on a mountain peak, contrary to those scholars who restrict the issue to the latter and exempt the former" (al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 95).

16 The author states in *Al-Kifāyah*, "It could also refer to increase with regard to *replication of likenesses*, for it is impossible for faith to remain except by that means, since it is an accident, and accidents do not last two moments. So the perpetuity of faith occurs by the replication of its like" (89v. [BT]).

17 The Ashʿarī scholar Imam al-Ṣāwī states that what is meant by "acceptance" of divine rulings is to not reject them, whether or not one implements them, and thus underscores the Sunni doctrine that failure to perform works does not negate a person's Islam. He also clarifies the divine rulings that one must accept to be a Muslim as "all that the Prophet ﷺ brought and that [in terms of historical transmission] is necessarily known of the religion" (*Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 136).

Also, the Sunni doctrine of the inseparability of faith and submission entails that every believer is a Muslim and that every Muslim is a believer. According to Imam al-Farhārī and Imam al-Bājūrī, what is meant is that the two designations (being a believer and being a Muslim) are always one and the same, from each of two perspectives: (1) as a legal ruling in this life, from the

perspective of fellow Muslims, and (2) as a divine judgment in the hereafter, from the perspective of God's knowledge. So while it is true that a person might in this life feign to be a Muslim while actually rejecting Islam in his or her heart, the rulings of faith (being a believer) and of submission (being a Muslim) would still be inseparable from each of the above two perspectives, since (1) in this life, the legal ruling of such a person would be both "believer" and "Muslim," because fellow Muslims would not know of the person's hypocrisy of belief, and (2) in the hereafter, such a person would *lack* both designations when being judged by God, the exalted, because the individual in this life had actually lacked both faith and submission. See al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, 131, 136; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 120–21; al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 263.

18 This tenet represents a foundational principle of Sunni hermeneutics: the default reading of scripture is literal, thereby safeguarding the religion from the heresy of esoterist reductionism. A figurative interpretation is resorted to only if the literal meaning results in logical impossibility (for example, contradiction), which must be proven with certainty by apodeictic demonstration (*burhān*), or if the literal reading contradicts what is definitively established from other verses of scripture. In that case, scholars are compelled to interpret the text figuratively, thereby preserving the religion from rational impossibility.

The former deviation (esoterist reductionism) interprets *away* the sacred law, such as, for example, claiming that the ritual prayer and washing mean only love and devotion in the heart, while the latter deviation (literalism despite logical impossibility) results in the heresy of anthropomorphism and likening God, the exalted, to His creation. As Imam Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī states in his creed, "Scripture is to be interpreted literally. Departure therefrom to meanings claimed by the esoterists, who are outright heretics [of unbelief] (*malāḥidah*), is heresy [of unbelief] (*ilḥād*)" (al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, 381–82),

to which Imam al-Taftāzānī comments, "[Heresy,] meaning a departure from Islam, and a joining and connecting with disbelief, for it entails denying the Prophet ﷺ in that which is necessarily known of the religion" (382), such as the five pillars of Islam and the well-known enormities prohibited in the religion.

However, according to Sunni theologians, the default literal interpretation of the Qur'an and sunnah does not preclude the validity of spiritual allusion (*ishārah*)—that is, intuitions that dawn upon the heart of the mystic while reading scripture and that serve only to supplement outward exegesis (*tafsīr*), without negating or replacing it. In fact, allusion is understood to proceed from the pinnacle of understanding, or in the words of al-Taftāzānī, "from the perfection of faith and pure gnosis," to aid believers in drawing nearer to the divine. For example, the verse in which God, the exalted, commands Prophet Moses ﵇ to "remove your two sandals" (20:12) (before entering the divine presence) is interpreted literally in outward exegesis, for God ordered him to literally take off his sandals. Yet in addition to that, by way of allusion, spiritual masters derive a lesson for their disciples to "remove the two sandals *of this world and the next*" so as to be detached from all besides God, the exalted, even from the rewards of the afterlife, because true love is reserved for God alone. See al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 381–82; al-Farhārī, *Al-Nibrās*, 338. See also, for example, Aḥmad b. ʿAjībah, *Al-Baḥr al-madīd fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurashī Raslān, 6 vols., 2nd ed. (Cairo: n.p., 1999), a unique Qur'anic exegesis that provides both outward exegesis and allusion.

19 This hadith is related by Abū Dāwūd in his Sunan, and its wording is "After having finished burying the deceased, the Prophet ﷺ would stand at the gravesite and say, 'Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask that he be made steadfast, for indeed he is right now being questioned'"—that is, by the two angels Munkar and Nakīr. Imam al-Munāwī says its chain of narration is well-authenticated (*ḥasan*). See al-Munāwī, *Al-Taysīr*, 2:254.

20 This hadith is related by al-Dāraquṭnī in his Sunan. Imam al-Munāwī says its chain of narration is acceptable (*wasaṭ*). See al-Munāwī, *Al-Taysīr*, 1:457.

APPENDIX A

The Kalam Cosmological Argument

THE ARGUMENT FOR the existence of God presented in most texts of classical Islamic theology, including *Al-Bidāyah*, is called the *kalam cosmological argument* (KCA). It is an apodeictic proof (or demonstration, Ar. *burhān*), meaning both that its premises are certain, not merely probable or likely, and that its syllogistic form is valid. Hence, the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises and is also certain.

Its minor premise is *the universe had a beginning*. Its major premise is *everything that has a beginning necessarily has an efficient cause*. Its conclusion is therefore *the universe necessarily has an efficient cause*. Moreover, the efficient cause of the universe cannot itself be temporal, as based on the above major premise, it too then would need an efficient cause, leading to either circular reasoning or an infinite regress of causes, both of which are logically absurd. Based on this reductio ad absurdum, the final conclusion is *the universe necessarily has an efficient cause that is eternal, or that transcends space and time*. There also exist implications of this argument that result in the affirmation of certain necessary attributes of this eternal efficient cause—such as life, knowledge, will, and power—in light of which it is proven that the eternal entity is in fact the personal creator of the heavens and earth affirmed by Islamic scripture.

Other cosmological arguments have been used in various traditions but are not dealt with here. While the KCA demonstrates a creator of the universe ex nihilo [and its sustaining ground of being], the Thomist cosmological argument (TCA) demonstrates only its sustaining ground of being: it affirms the current existence of finite, contingent beings and proceeds to a metaphysically necessary being as the basis for the current existence of those contingent beings. The argument is based specifically on the rejection of an infinite regress of concurrent, essentially ordered causes. The Leibnizian cosmological argument (LCA) demonstrates a sufficient reason something exists rather than nothing. It begins with the question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" and proceeds to the truth of a logically necessary proposition, "God exists," based on the principle of sufficient reason (PSR). Of the three cosmological arguments, it is uniquely the kalam version that seeks to prove the temporal finitude of the universe, as the other two allow for an eternal universe in proving the existence of God.

In addition, the simplicity of the KCA's premises and conclusion should not lead one to assume this argument is insufficient in accounting for the complexity of issues raised in theistic/atheistic arguments or in cosmology in general. A true and valid argument may have simple, straightforward premises even if its proponent must deal with involved issues in defending those premises. And once those premises are demonstrated as certain, it follows that subsequent rejection or doubt concerning them does not alone render them probabilistic. Rather, their certainty would have to be disproven.

This essay begins with the minor premise, followed by the major premise and conclusion. Each discussion is interspersed with common objections and rejoinders to those objections, some classical but many contemporary, at least in form. Several key considerations for the minor premise, as well as a few for the major premise and conclusion, are taken from

contemporary Christian theologian William Lane Craig, who has put forth a cogent presentation of the kalam cosmological argument in his book[1] with that title, a landmark work that has since ignited much debate in Western philosophical discourse. Much of the annotation and most discussions about the major premise and conclusion are not found in Craig's book; they are taken either from contemporary sources or the classical kalam tradition. The conclusion establishes not only the existence of God but also His attributes, which are logically necessary for creation to exist, and all of which comprise the metaphysical necessities of divinity that are affirmed by classical mainstream Sunnism.

Minor Premise: The Universe Had a Beginning

The minor premise is the key to the entire argument. Its basis, as presented in much of the classical kalam literature, is the temporality that is ubiquitous in the cosmos. (*Temporality* means the occurrence of something, or its existence subsequent to its non-existence, or its "coming into being." Its opposite is *atemporality*, which denotes eternality or timelessness.)

Using the Aristotelian ontological paradigm of substance and accident, Sunni theologians demonstrate that every component of the universe[2] either changes or can logically change, indicating its temporality, since "change" signifies the ending of one state and the occurrence of a new state; if every component of the universe is temporal, then the entire universe is temporal. It is important to note that this line of reasoning does not commit the fallacy of composition. While a quality's pertaining to each part of a whole does not *necessarily* entail that quality's applying to the whole itself, it nevertheless sometimes does entail that. So for example, if every brick in a wall weighs five pounds, the entire wall certainly does not weigh five pounds: that line of reasoning commits the fallacy of composition. But if every brick in a wall is red, the entire wall is certainly red: this line of reasoning is free of that fallacy. The former example is cumulative, while the latter

is not. Affirming the temporality of the entire universe based on the temporality of every component of the universe is akin to the latter example, not the former, since temporality is a non-cumulative property and can never add up to atemporality.

To prove the minor premise, Craig uses two philosophical[3] arguments: the impossibility of the existence of an actual infinity in space-time,[4] and—even if the latter were possible—the impossibility of formation of an actual infinity by successive addition.[5]

The Impossibility of the Existence of an Actual Infinity in Temporal Reality

In the first philosophical argument, Craig shows how modern Cantorian set theory, which treats an *actual infinity*[6] as a determinate totality, pertains only to the mathematical realm of concepts and as such has no bearing on extra-mental temporal existence. Actual infinities cannot exist in physical reality (despite the misleading adjective "actual"), as demonstrated by the contradictions entailed otherwise, even though the idea of an actual infinity may remain useful for conceptual mathematical systems. For example, further addition to an actual infinity is logically impossible; in real time or space, though, any number of things or events, however large, can validly be added to.[7]

Another paradox of set theory untenable in the real world is the equivalence of a whole to its part: it is self-evident (a first principle) that in objective reality, a whole is always greater than its part. In the Cantorian realm of actual infinities, however, an infinite set of all integers (1, 2, 3, ...) is shown by one-to-one correspondence to be equivalent to an infinite set of even integers (2, 4, 6, ...). Applied to the real world, then, the position of a beginningless universe would entail no difference between (1) past infinity until the present moment (the whole) and (2) past infinity until an event a thousand years ago (its part), which is clearly absurd. (In the classical kalam literature, this reductio ad absurdum argument is termed *burhān al-taṭbīq*,[8] or the "demonstration

by way of one-to-one correspondence.") Yet as Craig points out, even in the conceptual world of Cantorian infinities, the validity of one-to-one correspondence is never proven to be valid but is merely accepted by convention. The key point here is that even if the application of one-to-one correspondence to actual infinities is posited as valid *conceptually*, such as in set theory, it is without doubt untenable *ontologically*. That is, clear absurdities are entailed in the notion that actual infinities can obtain in real space-time, as shown by the principle of one-to-one correspondence, which therefore as a principle remains valid ontologically only for finite magnitudes and sets.

Indeed, several mathematicians acknowledge that modern set theory is only an abstract model of discourse, divorced from any implications in the physical universe. Bernard Bolzano (d. 1848), for example, an early pioneer of modern set theory, admits that actual infinite sets exist only in the "realm of things which do not claim actuality, and do not even claim possibility."[9] Moreover, several antinomies were identified that over time made set theory less and less tenable.

Specifically, Ernst Zermelo (d. 1953) and Bertrand Russell[10] (d. 1970) discovered contradictions in set theory that caused its abandonment by even former proponents, such as Richard Dedekind (d. 1916) and Gottlob Frege[11] (d. 1925). And David Hilbert's (d. 1943) analysis of set theory illustrates that the existence of an actual infinity in real time and space would not only entail numerous paradoxes but would in fact undermine the very axioms of finite numbers and hence mathematical reasoning in general. Such being the case, Hilbert concludes that actual infinities are not only logically absurd but, indeed, *mathematically* inadmissible in temporal reality.[12]

Here, it is critical to underscore the difference between an actual infinity and a potential infinity: while an actual infinity in any aggregative structure entails logical absurdity (namely, contradiction), therefore precluding the possibility that the universe

had no beginning, a potential infinity is possible and exists by way of conceptual (but not actual) division of any quantity or measure, or by way of potential addition to any quantity or measure. Confusing the two types of infinity is the most prevalent fallacy committed by those who object to the minor premise of the KCA. Richard Swinburne, for example, asserts that if an infinite number of actualized past events cannot occur, then "in that case all the members of the infinite series of periods of unequal length, of 1/2 hour, 1/4 hour, 1/8 hour, etc., which have already occurred in the past hour, are also now actual, which by Craig's [premise] (2) ['an actually infinite number of things cannot exist'] is not possible. So either [premise] (2) is false, or [premise] (1) ['a beginningless series of events in time cannot exist'] does not follow."[13] Here, Swinburne has mistaken the potential infinite divisibility of the past hour to be an actual infinity.

In similar fashion, Quentin Smith attempts several rebuttals of the KCA's minor premise, falling into the same error of confusing the two types of infinity.[14] For example, he asserts that the set (... -4, -3, -2, -1, 0), with the zero representing the present event and the negative numbers representing past events, proves the possibility of an infinite past of events. Yet such a set only represents a potential infinity, since we mentally count negative integers backwards, and can do so potentially without end, while in reality, however far we reach, the entire set would always remain finite. This of course is the exact opposite of how events in past time actually occur—namely, toward the future (represented in the set as moving from more negative to less negative). So a mere conventional switch of direction, along with the negation of integers in a mathematical set, fails to demonstrate the logical possibility of an actual infinitude of past events.[15]

Indeed, an infinite regress of events in time is an actual infinite, not a potential one. Aristotle[16] and Thomas Aquinas[17] (d. 1274) (and most Thomists) also erred on this point, deeming a past infinity to be a potential infinity, and thus logically

possible, their reasoning being that past events do not exist simultaneously. Because past events are sequential, they contended that no actual infinity is ever in existence *at any one moment* if the world had no beginning. Craig retorts, "But surely this analysis is inadequate. The fact that the events do not exist simultaneously is wholly irrelevant to the issue at hand; the fact remains that since past events, as determinate parts of reality, are definite and distinct and can be numbered, *they can be conceptually collected into a totality* [italics added]. Therefore, if the temporal sequence of events is infinite, the set of all past events will be an actual infinite."[18] This clearly differs from future events, which are not yet in existence and hence constitute a potential infinity. However far in the future events occur, the totality of time will always be finite, yet more can be added. Past events, however, have the quality of actuality that future events lack, and because of that, the contradictions of an actual infinity would apply if the universe were deemed beginningless. Indeed, this distinction explains how the KCA does not contradict the creedal tenet that paradise and hell are everlasting: time therein is always finite, yet according to theists, God, the exalted, will simply continue to re-create the two abodes and their inhabitants and experiences, without end.[19]

The Impossibility of Formation of an Actual Infinity by Successive Addition

Craig's second philosophical argument is based on the impossibility of forming an actual infinity by successive addition. This is epistemically separate from the first argument since it is justifiable to accept it if one rejects the first argument (although not vice versa). That is, even if an actual infinity in a changeable (meaning subject to change and thus temporal) universe were metaphysically possible, it could not be formed by successive addition of discrete, separate entities. But the events of the world are in fact discrete, separate entities, and the past sequence of events

was formed by their successive addition, so the past sequence of world events must necessarily have been finite.[20] The argument is essentially based on the fact that one can never count to and reach infinity, because however far one counts, one could always add more. Conceptually, a series, or collection, would be deemed "infinite" not because its last member is the "infinitieth" number but because it *lacks a last member*. Yet the present moment or event is the last member of the series of past moments/events.[21]

This argument was classically termed "the impossibility of traversing the infinite," put forth by the Christian theologian John Philoponus (d. 580), the Arab philosopher Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī (d. 256/870), the Jewish theologian Saadia ben Joseph (d. 942), and most Muslim scholars of kalam.[22] It is noteworthy that Saadia's version, reflecting the influence of kalam on his philosophy, argues against an infinite regress of past time itself, not just of past events in time. This coincides with the Sunni position that time is not an absolute continuum that predates the universe, such as in a Newtonian model, but that like space, time is created and finite. So the beginning of the universe is held to be the beginning of time itself.[23] Many philosophers, including Aristotle and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), argued that a first instant of time is impossible since any instant of time presupposes a prior instant. Aristotle states in *Physics*:

> Now since time cannot exist and is unthinkable apart from the moment, and the moment is a kind of middle-point, uniting as it does in itself both a beginning and an end, a beginning of future time and an end of past time, it follows that there must always be time: for the extremity of the last period of time that we take must be found in some moment, since time contains no point of contact for us except the moment. Therefore, since the moment is both a beginning and an end, there must always be time on both sides of it.[24]

Avicenna's argument is similar to Aristotle's, except that it is based on his unique modal analysis of time, which he identifies as a possibility associated with motion.[25]

However, this view of time is based on a Newtonian model of absolute time, as independent of space; even in such a model, the universe as space would certainly have a beginning (since a temporal series of events cannot be an actual infinity). Yet on a relational view of time (explained below), no absurdity is entailed in a first instant. (Incidentally, Einstein's (d. 1955) special and general theories of relativity have confirmed time as relational to space rather than absolute, in that the two are linked together as space-time.[26]) Indeed, the reasoning of Aristotle and Avicenna merely begs the question by asserting that "before creation" must imply a temporal prior state. However, the argument for "creation ex nihilo" simply asserts that what was before the cosmos was an ontological prior state of its *nonbeing*—while duly noting the metaphorical usage of the term *prior* in this context—not a temporal prior state that necessitates the existence of time. Creation ex nihilo asserts that, like space, time itself begins with the world's inception.

As theist Stuart Hackett (d. 2012) states, "Time is merely a relation among objects that are apprehended in an order of succession or that objectively exist in such an order.... [This fact] *voids* the objection that the beginning of the world implies an antecedent void time: for time, as such a relation of succession among experiences or objective processes, has no existence whatever apart from these experiences or processes themselves." Craig comments, "There does not appear to be, therefore, any absurdity in the notion of a beginning of time. The idea of a 'time before time' is a mental construction only, a product of the imagination. In reality there seems to be no impossibility in having time arise concomitantly with the universe ex nihilo."[27] (See below for further discussion on the finitude of ontological time.) Even David Hume (d. 1776), the father of modern skepticism, admitted the impossibility of past infinite time, saying (in the midst of his skeptical discourses), "An infinite number of real parts of time, passing in succession, and exhausted one after another, appears

so evident a contradiction, that no man, one should think, whose judgment is not corrupted, instead of being improved, by the sciences, would ever be able to admit of it."[28]

In his second philosophical argument,[29] Craig also deals with Zeno's paradoxes of motion and the thesis of Kant's first antinomy of pure reason. Regarding the former, he identifies the absurdity entailed in the completion of a "super-task" by purported "infinity machines," which is the completion of an "infinitieth" task. This of course is metaphysically impossible since an actual infinity cannot be formed by successive addition of distinct events (for no matter how many events the imaginary machine completes, that number could always be added to).

With respect to Zeno's paradoxes of motion, Aristotle states in *Physics*, "The first asserts the nonexistence of motion on the ground that that which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal." This paradox is called "Dichotomy" since it is based on repeated division into two. The second paradox is called "Achilles and the Tortoise," as Aristotle notes, "The second is the so-called Achilles, and it amounts to this, that in a race the quickest runner can never overtake the slowest, since the pursuer must first reach the point whence the pursued started, so that the slower must always hold a lead."[30]

Yet Zeno's paradoxes of Achilles and the Dichotomy are not paradoxes at all, because a finite distance does not actually contain an infinite number of physical points, so Achilles does not have to complete an *actually* infinite number of tasks. Finite distances have only *potential* infinities, by way of unending conceptual division.[31] Aristotle himself noted this essential difference in his response to Zeno's paradoxes. Again, one notes the prevalent fallacy of confusing the two types of infinity.

In his first antinomy of pure reason, Kant states, "The world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards space." He continues in his proof, "If we assume that the world has no

beginning in time, then up to every given moment an eternity has elapsed, and there has passed away in the world an infinite series of successive states of things. Now the infinity of a series consists in the fact that it can never be completed through successive synthesis. It thus follows that it is impossible for an infinite world-series to have passed away, and that a beginning of the world is therefore a necessary condition of the world's existence." He later comments in his observation on the thesis, "The true transcendental concept of infinitude is this, that the successive synthesis of units required for the enumeration of a quantum can never be completed. *Hence it follows with complete certainty that an eternity of actual successive states leading up to a given (the present) moment cannot have elapsed, and that the world must therefore have a beginning*" (italics added).

Kant also asserts the critical distinction between potential infinity and actual infinity, in the context of the difference between future infinity (which is potentially infinite) and past infinity (which entails an actual infinity and is therefore absurd), stating, "Since the future is not the condition of our attaining to the present, it is a matter of entire indifference, in our comprehension of the latter, how we may think of future time, whether as coming to an end or as flowing on to infinity."[32]

Again, those who object to the thesis of Kant's first antinomy commit the same fallacy of confusing the two types of infinity. Bertrand Russell, for example, argues that if the future can be infinite, then so can the past, despite the actuality of the past and the mere potentiality of the future.[33] Russell also errs in considering *insufficient time* to be the basis of the impossibility of completing an actual infinity by successive addition: "In the second place, when Kant says that an infinite series can 'never' be completed by successive synthesis, all that he has even conceivably a right to say is that it cannot be completed *in a finite time.*"[34] Yet traversing an actual infinity is impossible *irrespective of available time.* As Craig notes, "The impossibility of such a traversal has

nothing at all to do with the amount of time available: it is of the essence of the infinite that it cannot be completed by successive addition."[35]

The Finitude of Ontological Time

In his book *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, contemporary theist Robert Spitzer (d. 2015) devotes a chapter to proving the necessity of a creator of past time and presents a formal argument against the actual infinity of past time (and not just past events in time) in *any* changeable universe. Central to his argument is his definition of time—which appears to correspond to the kalam view of time as relational to space, and which this section aims to explore—namely, "an aggregating succession of non-contemporaneous distension intrinsic to changeable reality which limits a conditioned reality's existence."[36]

Spitzer begins by identifying the analytical contradiction entailed in the affirmation of "infinite past time," given that the very notion of infinity connotes the "unachievable" or "unactualizable." Past time and its traversal, though, connote "being achieved" or "being actualized." And past time *necessarily* connotes achievement or actualization, since otherwise it would be analytically undifferentiated from present time (which connotes "being achieved now") and future time (which connotes "not achieved"). The necessity of such differentiation can be demonstrated by the contradictions that would otherwise ensue, such as with the death of an animal, whose state changes from "alive" in past time to "not alive" in future time; were past time not differentiated from present and future times, then the animal could be affirmed as both living and not living, which is patently absurd.

Thus, the notion of "infinite past time" would entail the "achievement of the unachievable" or "actualization of the unactualizable," which are metaphysical absurdities and hence rationally inadmissible. This holds true even if one imagines a point on a line representing "now," with the line extending backwards

"forever," since that mental picture (1) contains only a representation or symbol for infinity (the extended line), not an actual infinity, and (2) no mental image can surmount a self-evident contradiction. This identification of the analytical contradiction entailed in the notion of "infinite past time" applies a fortiori to the notion of "a universe without beginning," or "a universe with infinite past events." It is the strongest argument for the premise that any changeable universe necessarily has a beginning, and alone is sufficient in rebutting the premise that Cantorian actual infinities are applicable to our universe.

Spitzer then proceeds to give synthetic significance to the analytical contradiction by demonstrating how no possible/changeable universe could have infinite past time apply to it. Such a demonstration presumes a sound conception of time itself, which is his point of departure. Aristotle and many medieval philosophers defined *time* as a "measure of motion,"[37] and such a conception of time (whether as an objective measurability or a subjectively imposed measurement by an observer) led to ambiguities regarding the ontological status of time. Therefore, the proofs for the creation of past time (meaning the first moment of time) appeared to them disputable (although, as noted above, even on such a definition of time, time could have an inception, given that the notion of "prior to its inception" denotes not a prior temporal state but a prior ontological state).

Yet recent discoveries in science, demonstrating the effects predicted by Einstein's general theory of relativity, have shown time to be a *something* that can have an effect on various forms of energy and motion, which in turn can affect the measurement of time.[38] Such empirical findings have led many philosophers to deem time as not a mere measure but ontologically real, just as space is ontologically real. The ontological reality of space is inferred from the phenomenon of motion that occurs through it. Space allows for motion from one location to another, and such motion presupposes both a distinctness of the two locations and

a unity between them that allows for that motion. Space therefore has a sort of continuity (even if it is atomistic in its fundamental composition), due to which space also has dimensionality, connectivity, and orientability—all of which are impossible for what is ontologically "nothing."

Yet space is a *contemporaneous* manifold, insofar as its elements exist at the same time. Time is a *non*-contemporaneous manifold, in that it is divided into before and after. This division is metaphysically necessary so that contradictory states of the same entity are not coincident. For example, the death of an animal entails a nonspatial transition of existential states, and its prior state of "alive" cannot be coincident with its subsequent state of "dead." Changeability therefore necessitates existential non-coincidence,[39] or time. Yet the very transition of existential states of the same entity entails a unity or continuum of time that is non-spatial. Since this manifold of existential non-coincidence cannot be spatial or extensive, it must be non-extensive, or as Spitzer terms it, "distensive." Thus, time is "a non-contemporaneous distensive manifold intrinsic to changeable reality."

Moreover, because the existence of any possible event necessarily presupposes a cause (see the major premise of the KCA below), or the fulfillment of conditions, the existence of every possible reality is ultimately the result of its cause (or fulfillment of its conditions). And since such a reality can possibly cease to exist, its cause/conditions are not fulfilled absolutely, thereby necessitating a *limiting condition intrinsic to it*. Spitzer suggests that time itself is this "intrinsic, limiting condition of a conditioned reality's existence."

Finally, it is intuitively known that time has directionality, from past into future. Yet time itself cannot be a motion, since any motion presupposes a temporal component, which too would be a motion, leading to an infinite regress of temporal components. So time is neither spatial nor a motion, yet it has a clear directionality of succession. From the perspective of the temporal

succession from before to after, changeable (or contingent) realities within time themselves either cease to exist or change, the latter entailing their continuity in existence. This continuity in existence must transpire in the same nexus (or series of connections) that prevents the contradictory states of before and after (such as when an animal dies). Hence, time is the nexus of both existential non-coincidence and continuity in existence. These considerations culminate in the aforementioned definition of time articulated by Spitzer: "an aggregating succession of non-contemporaneous distension intrinsic to changeable reality which limits a conditioned reality's existence."

While time as an aggregating succession is not the measure of motion, it must definitely be measurable, given that it cannot be an aggregate of dimensionless points of zero magnitude. This is because a point of zero magnitude could not divide contradictory states of the same entity (e.g., an animal alive in one moment and dead in the next) and because the accumulation of zero-magnitude points, no matter how many, is still zero magnitude. As mentioned earlier, one type of potential infinity is the continuous division of any quantity or measure, which conceptually could go on forever. However, based on the above reasoning, any actual division of time must end at a smallest possible unit that is greater than zero magnitude and thus is finite and measurable. And based on the same reasoning, space also must be actually composed of indivisible units, each greater than zero magnitude and thus finite and measurable. Indeed, as Spitzer notes, any possible (changeable) universe must necessarily be made up of a finitely small minimum interval of time and a finitely small minimum interval of space. This corresponds with the classical Sunni position on space and time—namely, that each is composed of indivisible units of finite magnitude. Like space, time comprises instants that are real entities of actual magnitude.

As such, any changeable universe—*change* signifying it comprises time and space—must necessarily be an aggregative

structure (of finite minimum intervals of time and space), and as discussed earlier, based on the contradictions of set theory found by Hilbert and others, actual infinities cannot be applied to any aggregative structure. Therefore, past time of any changeable universe (and not merely the past *events* of that universe) must be finite.

Major Premise: Everything That Has a Beginning Necessarily Has an Efficient Cause

The major premise of the KCA affirms causality, or the causal principle, as a universal and necessary reality of any possible (changeable/contingent/temporal) universe. Muslim scholastics considered this principle self-evident[40] and hence without need of demonstration: it is known a priori that every occurrence, or temporal event (*ḥādith*), has an efficient cause (*muḥdith*). An efficient cause is of course extrinsic to its effect. The KCA causal principle applies not only to the notion of the existence of something possible/temporal (or inception of something nonexistent) but also to the notion of the change of an already existent thing.[41]

Moreover, the principle is not derived by induction[42] and thus does not commit the fallacy of composition. KCA proponents do not affirm the major premise as a result of empirically observing that every occurrence in the world has a cause, and hence their reasoning is not from parts ("events in the universe are caused") to the whole ("therefore, the universe itself is caused"). Rather, it is a metaphysical first principle that is known a priori: the notion of an "uncaused event" is axiomatically false.

The major premise is also not a case of "begging the question," the fallacy of the conclusion ("the universe necessarily has an efficient cause") being included in the premise ("everything that has a beginning necessarily has an efficient cause"). The evidence of the major premise is not dependent on the conclusion, for it is a metaphysical axiom intuitively known to man, irrespective of one's position on whether the universe had a beginning or not.[43] Of note, later kalam scholars expressed the causal principle

from the perspective of modal ontology—that is, for any possible entity (*mumkin*) to exist (*possible* meaning that, conceptually, its existence and its nonexistence are metaphysically equivalent, qualitatively identical, and mutually exclusive), it must necessarily have an efficient cause (*mu'aththir*). For any possible entity or property, its essence (*what* it is) alone cannot account for its existence (*that* it is) since it just as well could be nonexistent. Thus, something besides it must cause its existence. This modal formulation of course subsumes the formulation of temporality, since every temporal event is undoubtedly possible (in that it is neither metaphysically *necessary* nor *impossible*). Moreover, as kalam scholastics emphasize, because of the conceptual equivalence of existence and nonexistence for any possible entity, the actuality of its existence logically requires that its efficient cause have the attribute of will. The principle of causation, then, includes the principle of determination (*takhṣīṣ*), whereby notions of a "mechanical cause" or "set of necessary and sufficient conditions" are obviated. The attribute of will indicates the real agency of a living creator. (This point will be elaborated later in light of what has been called "Hume's stopper" to cosmological arguments, as well as Kant's antithesis in his first antinomy of pure reason.)

Commenting on the self-evident nature of the causal principle, Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī states in his masterful *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*, "Absolute and universal necessity has given its verdict upon the need of every possible existent for an extrinsic efficient cause, as well as the impossibility of preponderance of one of its two ontological states without a giver of preponderance. Moreover, the ambiguity [some find] in this principle, which is only due to the difficulty [they have] in its conception, does not detract [from the necessity of this principle]."[44] The inability of a given analyst to arrive at certainty about the causal principle, however intelligent the individual may be, does not in any way detract from its self-evident nature. A philosopher who fails to understand a necessarily true principle might imagine it to be false, but it

does not follow from this that the principle might in fact be false. A self-evident truth can be obviously self-evident, or its self-evidence might be opaque—yet in either case, its truthfulness is equally undeniable.

Despite the self-evidence of the causal principle, several objections to its necessity have been attempted. In his debate with the theist Frederick Copleston (d. 1994), Bertrand Russell famously appealed to the notion of "brute facticity" when he said, "I should say that the universe is just there, and that's all."[45] The contemporary philosopher Roger Scruton (d. 2020) echoes the sentiment: "Why should we suppose that there must be an explanation of *everything*? Why cannot we simply accept the irreducible contingency of the world and all that is contained in it?"[46] Yet such an appeal merely avoids the issue and indeed rejects what is intuitive to all. As John Locke (d. 1704) said, "[M]an knows by an intuitive certainty that bare nothing can no more produce any real being, than it can be equal to two right angles."[47]

Elsewhere Russell argued that physics has proven that causation is erroneous, given that its equations do not invoke causes but only relations of function, and the formulaic bidirectionality of equations negates the asymmetry of causation (namely, that causes produce effects, and not vice versa).[48] While there are many rebuttals to this line of reasoning, the most forceful is that physics does not provide an exhaustive representation of reality. It articulates only those aspects of reality that can be expressed by mathematics. After all, an equation is only an abstraction, nothing more. *That which it explains* has aspects that are not captured by the equation, including change, which philosophically and by necessity entails an agent of that change.

This response is also applicable to the objections of those who invoke discoveries in quantum mechanics as evidence of uncaused phenomena, such as quantum indeterminism, or the finding that particles randomly go into and out of existence in a quantum vacuum. Like physics, quantum mechanics gives

only a partial view of reality in its mathematical descriptions. Mathematical abstractions or quantum discoveries bespeak something of the physics of reality, yet are silent on metaphysics. It remains metaphysically self-evident that any change, by necessity, presupposes a cause.[49]

As the contemporary physicist Stephen M. Barr states in response to this "quantum indeterminism objection":

> However, this objection is not a cogent one. All that is really being said is that the laws of physics and the past state of the universe do not by themselves determine every event that will happen in the future. That is like saying that events in act I of *Hamlet* and the rules that govern the writing of plays do not by themselves exactly determine what happens in act II of *Hamlet*. Nevertheless, it would be foolish to argue on that basis that the particular words of *Hamlet*, or the play *Hamlet* as a whole, are uncaused, or that *Hamlet* needs no author, or that Shakespeare did not exist. To put it another way, all that quantum theory says (according to this interpretation of it) is that certain events do not have a completely determinative *physical* cause. That does not imply that these events have no cause whatsoever. That would only follow if one had already assumed that materialism is true and that all causes have to be physical causes.[50]

(Also, even among scientists, the notion of subatomic "uncaused" events is based on a certain interpretation of those events, the so-called Copenhagen interpretation, as Barr noted with his statement "according to this interpretation of it." Yet several alternative interpretations exist, such as the pilot wave theory of David Bohm (d. 1992), which is a causal interpretation.[51])

Additionally, the quantum particles that seemingly enter and leave existence physically uncaused fail to validate the notion of "something coming from nothing" for the obvious reason that a quantum vacuum is not "nothing" as used in philosophy. Rather, it is philosophically "something, with properties": a field with a very low energy level. Physicist David Albert explains, "Relativistic-quantum-field-theoretical vacuum states—no less

than giraffes or refrigerators or solar systems—are particular arrangements of *elementary physical stuff*.... The fact that particles can pop into and out of existence, over time, as those fields rearrange themselves, is not a whit more mysterious than the fact that fists pop in and out of existence, over time, as my fingers rearrange themselves."[52] Certainly, quantum particle behavior fails to disprove the metaphysical maxim that every event necessarily has an efficient cause.

Hume on Causation

Arguably the most famous objection to causality is that of David Hume, who argued that its necessity is neither intuitive nor demonstrable. In doing so, he relied on his imaginative faculty to conceive of the idea of an object as nonexistent in one moment and then the idea of it as existent in the next moment, without being grounded in the idea of any causal principle. Since Hume saw all these ideas as being distinct and separable, he concluded that the occurrence of a temporal thing without any cause is logically possible, and that the necessity of causality is itself impossible to demonstrate. As Hume states:

> But here is an argument, which proves at once, that the foregoing proposition is neither intuitively nor demonstrably certain. We can never demonstrate the necessity of a cause to every new existence, or new modification of existence, without shewing at the same time the impossibility there is, that any thing can ever begin to exist without some productive principle; and where the latter proposition cannot be prov'd, we must despair of ever being able to prove the former. Now that the latter proposition is utterly incapable of a demonstrative proof, we may satisfy ourselves by considering, that as all distinct ideas are separable from each other, and as the ideas of cause and effect are evidently distinct, 'twill be easy for us to conceive any object to be non-existent this moment, and existent the next, without conjoining to it the distinct idea of a cause or productive principle. The separation, therefore, of the idea of a cause from that of a

> beginning of existence, is plainly possible for the imagination; and consequently the actual separation of these objects is so far possible, that it implies no contradiction nor absurdity; and is therefore incapable of being refuted by any reasoning from mere ideas; without which 'tis impossible to demonstrate the necessity of a cause.[53]

Before responding to Hume's position, it is important to highlight the difference between his skepticism of causality and Sunni occasionalism: while Hume questioned the very principle of causality, Sunnis affirm the necessity of the causal principle yet reject the necessity of the perceived causes in the world, to which their effects are conventionally conjoined (i.e., secondary causation). That is to say, the mind *can* validly conceive of a secondary cause as distinct from its perceived effect (such as with fire and burning, or food and satiation), because that distinction entails no contradiction; thus, the separability of the two is logically possible. However, because the causal principle itself—that every temporal event needs an extrinsic efficient cause—is a necessity, every effect must be attributed to *some* cause. The causal principle is not distinct and thus not separable from the occurrence of any effect. And specifically, based on the universal scope of God's omnipotence, Muslim scholastics ascribe all things, occurrences, and hence effects in the cosmos *directly to divine activity* as their "efficient cause" (and hence directly to Him as their creator), while apparent worldly causes are recognized as mere occasions of the divine fiat. Every occurrence is created directly by God and was known to Him and willed by Him in His beginningless eternality. As such, in the history of Western philosophical views on causality, it is more the view of the philosopher Nicolas Malebranche[54] (d. 1715) (rather than the view of David Hume) that is reminiscent of Sunni occasionalism.

As for the necessity of the causal principle itself, Muslim scholastics would reassert that it is self-evident, and Hume's imagining something coming into existence and labeling it "uncaused" in no way proves the possibility of an uncaused event.

Metaphysically speaking, "possibility" is based on the criterion of "being free from contradiction," knowledge of which is either self-evident or deduced; mere human imagination, especially when its contents are mislabeled, is not the criterion of possibility. As G. E. M. Anscombe (d. 2001) states, "But what am I to imagine if I imagine a rabbit coming into being without a cause? Well, I just imagine a rabbit coming into being. That this *is* the imagination of a rabbit coming into being without a cause is nothing but, as it were, the *title* of the picture. Indeed I can form an image and give my picture that title. But from my being about to do *that*, nothing whatever follows about what is possible to suppose 'without contradiction or absurdity' as holding in reality."[55]

Indeed, Hume's imagining of something as "coming into existence without a cause" could very well have been labeled as "having an *unseen* cause" or as "being imagined *without its cause being imagined*" or even as "being *transported* into his imagination after prior existence elsewhere." Contemporary theist Edward Feser comments:

> Suppose the Humean tries to add something to the description so that it will show what Hume wants it to show. What could that addition be? As Anscombe notes, it will have to include at the very least a way of distinguishing the rabbit's *coming into being* from its merely being *transported* (by teleportation, say). For if the scenario is not in the first place a case of *coming into being*, it cannot be a case of coming into being *without a cause*. But how can we distinguish the two apart from appeal to a *generating* cause as opposed to a *transporting* cause, as we do in ordinary circumstances? And if we need to bring in the idea of a generating cause in order to show that we are really dealing with a case of *coming into being* in the first place, then we have defeated the whole point of the exercise, which was to get *rid* of the idea of a cause. In short, Humean thought experiments seem to lead us away from the principle of causality only insofar as they are loosely described. The moment we start to make them more precise, they lead us back to the principle.[56]

Ironically, Hume himself admitted that he personally did not deny the causal principle but only argued against its demonstrability,[57] in light of which his skepticism can be seen as an epistemological argument. Still, Hume's empiricism undermines itself since it is a viewpoint that itself cannot be determined empirically. Hume's argument against the causal principle is also self-refuting, given that the rejection of causality dissolves the very inference between an argument's premises and conclusion: Hume has no basis to draw any conclusions from his line of reasoning, without recourse to the causal relationship between his line of reasoning and its conclusion. And if the Humean were to respond that the relationship between an argument's premises and conclusion is grounded in the principle of sufficient reason rather than in actual causation per se, still, in the absence of causality, his expression of the argument remains divorced from any effect in countering arguments for the necessity of causation (and thus the KCA). At some level, his argument requires causation to, as it were, get off the ground. As with all first principles of logic and metaphysics, attempts to deny them nonetheless make use of them in arguments—and must do so—thereby demonstrating the incoherence of denying first principles.

Conclusion: The Universe Necessarily Has an Extrinsic Efficient Cause

Once the causal principle is affirmed as necessary, one must apply it to the universe as a whole, since the universe had a beginning. Also, this assertion is metaphysical, so it is not vitiated by a physical law, such as the first law of thermodynamics, which states that in a closed physical system, matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed by other physical processes but only changed thereby. The creation of the universe ex nihilo, however, does not violate this law since it does not posit matter being created *in an already existent physical system*. The theist would also add that a physical law cannot constrain the omnipotence of the

divine, for no logical contradiction is entailed by matter/energy being created even in a closed physical system.[58]

Explaining this philosophical conclusion of the KCA, the Māturīdī theologian al-Lāmishī states:

> Once it is established that the universe is an occurrent [i.e., has a temporal beginning], it certainly follows that it had a Creator that caused it, for every occurrent must have an efficient cause, and its efficient cause must necessarily be other than itself. This is because its occurrence [i.e., temporal origination] is either by its causing itself or by an extrinsic efficient cause. The former is logically impossible since prior to its existence it was nonexistent, and a nonexistent thing can perform no action, so it is logically absurd for the universe to cause itself.... Therefore, its occurrence necessarily results from an extrinsic efficient cause.[59]

Rationally, nothing that is a part of the universe can be its efficient cause that propelled it into existence. If such a notion is asserted, it fails at the level of logic and reason, even if expressed in the discourse of physics or debated in modern cosmology. In the 2010 bestseller *The Grand Design*, acclaimed physicist Stephen Hawking (d. 2018) and coauthor Leonard Mlodinow set out to challenge belief in the divine creation of the universe. According to Hawking, the universe arose spontaneously due to its laws of physics, specifically his M-theory, a theory of everything (TOE) of supersymmetric gravity that operates in multiple dimensions. Moreover, the fine-tuning of the universe, which seems to undeniably indicate an all-wise, omniscient, and omnipotent designer, is explained (away) by multiverse theory, which posits an infinite or near-infinite number of universes, so many that anything possible (such as the fine-tuning of our particular universe) would occur in at least one universe.

Without venturing into the science of his claims, one can readily note the logical errors in his discourse. Hawking contends, "Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing."[60] This statement, as the mathematician

John C. Lennox points out in his cogent rebuttal[61] of *The Grand Design*, is self-contradictory. Hawking predicates action ("can and will create") to a subject ("the universe"), yet by the very meaning of the sentence, the subject is nonexistent prior to the action ("will create *itself* from *nothing*"). And it is self-evident that a nonexistent thing can perform no action. Even David Hume admitted that for something to cause itself is, indeed, "an evident contradiction."[62] Likewise, atheist philosopher Quentin Smith, who attempts a highly technical argument for a self-caused universe, admits, "No individual can bring about its own existence, because no individual can bring about anything unless it (already) exists."[63] Moreover, the basis of Hawking's contention is "a law like gravity," which is a perceived phenomenon of *the universe*, the very subject of the sentence and what is nonexistent prior to the action. So if gravity existed, then *something* of the universe that underwent gravity must have existed; hence there was something, not nothing. (This point was noted above in the discussion of quantum mechanics.) This contradicts the end of the sentence: "create itself *from nothing*." And (hypothetically), if the law of gravity were not part of the universe but existed separately and prior to it (putting aside the incoherence of a physical law existing in the abstract), then *its* existence would have to be explained, for it certainly could have been nonexistent or could have had alternative properties, and thus is metaphysically possible and temporal, not necessary and eternal. So what urged its being?

Overall, Hawking's M-theory of supersymmetric gravity fails to disqualify the existence of God since it fails to explain why anything temporal exists at all. And as acknowledged by numerous scientists themselves, multiverse theory is not much of a scientific position, given that it is not backed by any meaningful scientific data. It thus appears to be more of a philosophical theory, albeit expressed in the language of science, that demands a great leap of faith—and not faith backed by rational or empirical evidence, but the sort of blind faith that, because of its blindness and purely

speculative nature, could undermine the objectivity and neutrality of the scientific enterprise in the eyes of people. Being expressed in scientific terminology is not sufficient for a theory to qualify as scientific; there must be actual empirical data unfettered by dogma. Moreover, the theory still fails to rule out the existence of God: the assumed multiverse itself is changeable/temporal/contingent, and thus necessitates an eternal/necessary efficient cause (creator) for its existence. Indeed, Hawking's entire project is rooted in scientism, as he boasts the superiority of science over metaphysics and its sufficiency in judging on such matters. The very premise of scientism, however, proves self-refuting, in that science is unable to prove scientifically that it alone can discover truth. That is but a philosophical position and a false one at that. As the contemporary theist John Haught notes, science can never take place without the human trust in the intelligibility of the world, in the mind's ability to correctly access that intelligibility, and in the belief that seeking accurate knowledge of the cosmos is itself a noble and virtuous endeavor—all of which, according to traditional metaphysics, is rooted in the very transcendent reality that created the human mind and the cosmos in the first place.[64] While Hawking boldly proclaims in his introduction that "philosophy is dead,"[65] the plethora of logical errors and philosophical assumptions in his discourse leads one to agree with John Lennox's statement "Philosophers just might be tempted to comment: so that is what comes of saying philosophy is dead!"[66]

Returning to the only metaphysically valid explanation, then, that the universe has an extrinsic efficient cause, al-Lāmishī concludes his discussion as follows:

> To proceed, its extrinsic efficient cause must be eternal [or necessarily existent], for otherwise it would be temporal, since there is no intermediate state between the two. The eternal is that without inception, while the temporal is what has inception, and there is no middle status between affirmation and negation. Yet if the efficient cause of the universe were itself temporal, it too would need an

> efficient cause, which would need its own efficient cause, *ad infinitum*.... In such a case, the universe could not possibly exist. Yet it is empirically known to exist, so it perforce follows that its inception is conjoined to [the action and choice of] an eternal Creator. And God alone grants success.[67]

This point is most critical, as many atheists object that affirming a divine creator of the universe commits the fallacy of "passing the buck": "If God created the universe, then who created God?"[68] Yet this line of reasoning fails to grasp the metaphysical necessities that pertain to the efficient cause of the universe: rationally, that cause must be atemporal, because if it were temporal, it too would need a cause for its existence, which if temporal would also need a cause, and so forth, leading to an infinite regress (or if returned to a subsequent cause, circular reasoning). Based on this reductio ad absurdum, the one efficient cause of all temporal things must itself be eternal and uncaused; it must transcend space-time. And the eternality of the Creator—*eternality* meaning having neither beginning nor conceivable end—entails that *existence* (or *being* itself) is the Creator's *essential* attribute: the Creator must be necessarily existent (*wājib al-wujūd*), while the cosmos and all its components have only contingent or possible existence (*jā'iz al-wujūd* or *mumkin al-wujūd*). The very essence of the Creator is existence: "what He is" entails "that He is." If His essence were not existence, His existence would also need a cause, resulting in infinite regress or circular reasoning. And because His essence is existence, He can have neither beginning nor end.

Some philosophers object that the notion of necessary existence is assumed in the cosmological argument rather than proven, but this objection does not hold, as demonstrated in the reductio argument stated here. The necessities of (1) the universe's beginning and (2) the principle of causation/determination, along with the impossibility of an infinite regress (or circular reasoning), allow for no other conclusion. Furthermore, the notion of "necessarily existent" differs from that of being "self-caused,"

which is an analytic contradiction nowhere asserted in the KCA. Scruton, for example, appears to erroneously treat both concepts as one, stating in response to the question of "What caused the *first cause?*": "There is only one satisfactory answer: namely, that he caused himself. He is the full explanation of his own existence. It follows from his nature that he exists. And another way of saying this ... is that the first cause is a *necessary* being." But these are two very different notions: "he caused himself" is a rational absurdity since nothing can cause itself, for action presupposes existence, while a necessary being is an entity whose very essence is to exist ("It follows from his nature that he exists"). The KCA concludes with the eternal and necessarily existent Creator, who is neither caused by anything else nor self-caused.[69] Also, the Creator must be absolutely without need and perfectly self-sufficient, since dependence on another would entail only *possible* existence, and He must be utterly unique and dissimilar from creation, since His similarity to anything temporal would entail His temporality. The eternal being must be categorically distinct from all things temporal.

In light of these metaphysical considerations, the absurdity of proposed alternatives to theism become apparent. For example, the atheist philosopher Quentin Smith contends:

> If I found the causal principle to be self-evident, I need not find myself required to accept theism. I could easily assume the Big Bang singularity has some other cause than a divine one. I could adopt on a priori grounds Newton-Smith's theory that it has some prior physical cause and avoid the obligation to construct some a posteriori argument for this thesis. Alternatively, I could adopt John Leslie's theory that the value of goodness created the singularity, or Thomas Nagel's suggestion that something humanly inconceivable caused the singularity.[70]

Yet Newton-Smith's theory of "some prior physical cause" fails to escape the temporal nexus, shifting the demand for a cause up one level: What then would its cause be? And John Leslie's theory

assigns creative power to an attribute ("the value of goodness") that mysteriously lacks an entity to which it is attributed, while it is an axiomatic principle that no value or trait can subsist without being ascribed to a real entity. So to avoid committing the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, Leslie would have to affirm goodness as not a mere value but an actual entity. Besides that, one may ask if this value of goodness is eternal and necessary or temporal and possible. If the latter, what caused its existence? If the former, then he seems to be asserting a necessarily existent creator of the universe. Thus, Quentin Smith's attempt to escape theism has only resulted in encountering it once again, albeit with semantic adjustments (e.g., calling the Creator "goodness" instead of "God"). Thomas Nagel's suggestion is likewise not much of an alternative to theism, for according to the theism of Islam (and other religions), God's reality *is* "humanly inconceivable": only God knows His ineffable reality and infinite perfection. But there are many truths about God that the human mind can know. Theology is the elucidation of true propositions about God, derived from rational deduction (and confirmed by scripture), such as "God is necessarily existent," "God is eternal," "God is omnipotent," and other metaphysical necessities that the human intellect *can* conceptualize since their negation entails contradiction. As with other proposed alternatives to theism, Nagel's theory lacks the explanatory force that theology provides. We cannot fathom the reality of God, but we can certainly know that He is real.

The conclusion of the KCA also includes the affirmation of four divine attributes for the necessarily existent Creator: life, knowledge, will, and power. Based on the eternality of the Creator, these divine attributes must themselves be eternal—atemporally ascribed to the divine entity and hence inseparable from it, yet as real attributes, conceptually distinct from the divine entity. The latter three of these four attributes are metaphysical necessities for the creative act itself: power to cause the existence of the universe; will to select its existence; and knowledge of the

selection, the act, and the resultant effect. Because the universe is metaphysically possible and therefore can equally exist or not exist—since (conceptually) the very essence of possibility is to favor neither being nor nonbeing, with both ontological options being qualitatively identical—the actual existence ("preponderance of being") of the universe is sufficient evidence not only of the necessary existence of the Creator but also of His attributes of power, will, and knowledge. The very act of granting existence (or "giving preponderance") requires knowledge, will, and power. And the attribute of life is rationally presupposed in the affirmation of these three attributes; only a living entity can be knowing, willing, and powerful.

Regarding the divine attributes of knowledge, will, and power, Sunni theologians also deduce the universal scope of their associations: what the Creator knows, what He can possibly will, and what He can possibly create. While it is the cosmos[71] that signifies the existence of these divine attributes, their being unlimited in scope is necessitated, given that any limitation would presuppose a superior determinant to limit them, and because the limitation itself would entail their temporality and mere possible existence, thus entailing possible existence of the divine entity itself. So if the necessarily existent Creator has knowledge, His knowledge must be universal and unlimited, pertaining to all that is itself rationally necessary, possible, and impossible. And if He has will and power, then those attributes must also be universal and unlimited in scope. However, because will and power relate to causing the actual existence of a thing, their associations (what He can will and what He can create) must be possible things, not metaphysical necessities or impossibilities. Only something itself possible can be willed into actual existence; the necessary, by definition, already exists, and the impossible, by definition, cannot exist, since it is itself meaningless.[72] Yet among all things possible, there can be no exception or limitation to what the necessarily existent can choose and create. This consideration

relates also to Sunni occasionalism: based on the universal scope of divine will and divine power, if something temporal does in fact occur, only the Necessarily Existent could be its agent, for His will and power cannot be limited.

The final implication of the KCA's conclusion is the oneness and unicity of the Creator. The Necessarily Existent must be one, without partner or part, since composition or partnership would entail temporality, limitation, and other meanings that contradict *necessary* existence. Anything temporal or limited needs a cause or determining agent to grant it existence and specify its limitations. Duality or plurality would necessitate between each entity/part a distinguishing factor upon which those entities/parts would thus be dependent, and dependence entails possible (as opposed to necessary) existence; the Necessarily Existent must perforce have absolute unicity and uniqueness. Also, were there a second divine entity (or more), then the omnipotent will of one of them would necessarily be limited or hindered by the other, which would negate its divinity (as all-powerful) as well as its eternality, since only the temporal can be limited and is subject to change.[73]

The above deductions serve to obviate the objection of David Hume that Garrett J. DeWeese and Joshua Rasmussen have called "Hume's stopper," versions of which many philosophers employ in their objections to theistic arguments.[74] In part V of Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Philo (d. ca. 50) complains to Cleanthes (d. ca. 230 BCE) that the theistic argument from design does not prove the deity affirmed by theism but instead could be understood as proving an infant deity, an inferior deity dominated by a superior one, or an old and retired deity who is no longer involved in his production.[75] Clearly, this stopper has no force against the KCA. The Necessarily Existent must be one, cannot be subdued by another, and cannot change; only something with temporal/possible existence can be an infant, inferior, or old and retired. Duality, plurality, being dominated, and

undergoing change are all traits of the temporal/possible and are not conceivable with respect to eternal/necessary existence.

Many atheists have responded to theistic arguments with their own versions of Hume's stopper, such as the notion that the eternal first cause could be the universe itself, for first-cause arguments prove only that *some* eternal/necessary being exists, not that the eternal/necessary being is the God of theism. The eighteenth-century French physicist Jean d'Alembert (d. 1783) contended, "To someone who could grasp the universe from a unified standpoint, the entire creation would appear as a unique truth and necessity."[76] However, the KCA begins with the deduction that the cosmos is temporal (and thus not eternal and necessary), and that indeed any changeable universe must be temporal, since an actual infinity cannot obtain in any aggregative structure. Moreover, the completion of the KCA shows how it is the very God of theism that is proven, not merely "some eternal/necessary being."

Still, to argue that *this* universe is in and of itself a metaphysical necessity is, in the words of Barr, "patently absurd." He continues:

> The existence of this particular universe in which we live is plainly *not* a necessity. In this particular universe there is a sycamore tree in my front yard. It might just as well have been an apple tree. To say that this universe, in all its particularity, with all of its details, had necessarily to exist is not only absurd, it is also profoundly unscientific in spirit. It would mean that everything about the world could be deduced by pure thought without taking the trouble to do any experiments or make any observations. If the world with all its contents were necessarily as it is, then Columbus did not have to sail the ocean blue—he might have been able to deduce the existence of America and even to have mapped all its mountains and charted all its waterways without leaving his armchair.[77]

Another Humean objection is found in section XI of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*,[78] in which Epicurus (d. 270 BCE)

argues against the people of Athens for his atheism, and in the course of his discussion asserts that their argument from the cosmos for the existence of its creator proves only a deity powerful enough for the cosmos, nothing more. As noted above, this objection is precluded by the necessity that the divine attributes of power, will, and knowledge are universal and unlimited in their associations. The Creator of the cosmos, even though His existence is proven by the cosmos, must have infinite power, since otherwise He too would be temporal/possible, having been subdued and limited by another.

Moreover, in the context of the KCA, the affirmation of these divine attributes serves to distinguish between the notion of "efficient cause" in philosophy and what is meant in the argument as referring to the divine Creator of all things temporal. While the term *efficient cause* is used throughout the KCA, it is not to be understood in a mechanistic sense; rather, as per the completion of the argument, it indeed refers to the living, omniscient, willing, omnipotent Creator who is affirmed in revealed scriptures, the last of which is the Qur'an. Thus, Sunni theologians also assert that the Necessarily Existent must possess the divine attributes of hearing, sight, and speech, the evidence of which is the unequivocal affirmation of them in explicit verses of Islamic revelation, which is their primary proof. However, in the spirit of their kalam enterprise of natural theology, Sunni scholastics affirm these attributes also in light of the divine absolute perfection, since negation of them would entail the patently counterintuitive notion of a "deaf, dumb, and blind" divine being (transcendent is God above such descriptions).

Altogether, the conclusion and implications of the KCA result in the affirmation of thirteen necessary attributes of the creator, all of which signify what it means to be divine—namely (1) existence (*wujūd*), which is His essential attribute since it refers to necessary existence, the necessary implications of which are five negational attributes, negational in that each is essentially a

negation of an absurdity of necessary existence; these are (2) eternality (*qidam*), which negates having a beginning; (3) immutability (*baqā'*), which negates having an end or changing; (4) self-sufficiency (*qiyām bi al-nafs*), which negates need or dependence; (5) dissimilarity from all things temporal (*mukhālafah li al-ḥawādith*), which negates any resemblance to the temporal; and (6) absolute oneness, unicity, and uniqueness (*waḥdāniyyah*), which negate composition, duality, multiplicity, or any sort of partnership.

Also, the very existence of the cosmos, let alone the design and grace that imbue it, necessarily entails that the Creator have the following affirmative attributes, affirmative in that each is essentially an affirmation of an attribute that the Creator cannot possibly lack—namely (7) life (*ḥayāh*), (8) knowledge or omniscience (*ʿilm*), (9) will (*irādah*), and (10) power or omnipotence (*qudrah*). And based on the aforementioned consideration of divine perfection, the Necessarily Existent must also have (11) hearing (*samʿ*), (12) sight (*baṣar*), and (13) speech (*kalām*). Each of these thirteen attributes is of course confirmed by the revealed scripture of Islam.[79]

Finally, it is of note that some medieval Arab philosophers had difficulty reconciling the attribute of divine will with the Neoplatonic paradigm they adopted in their metaphysical deliberations. Interestingly, as Craig addresses in his discussion of the conclusion of the KCA, this notion was also expressed by Kant in the antithesis of his first antinomy. Kant argues for a beginningless universe using a reductio ad absurdum argument that if there were a first event in time, there would be a prior "empty time," and in a prior empty time, the necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of the first event could not possibly exist. This is because were they to exist, what brought about their existence? And if they had existed well before that moment, then why did the first event not occur at that much earlier time? They would have produced their effect from past eternity, so the world

itself cannot have had a beginning in time, or the world could not possibly have existed at all.

We have already alluded to part of the response to this argument in that it presupposes a Newtonian model of absolute time, while the objection does not hold on a relational view of time, for the first event is then the inception of both space and time, so no prior empty time existed. Yet Craig adds that Sunni theologians, in particular al-Ghazālī, had already preempted this objection with the principle of determination (*takhṣīṣ*)—that conceptually, for anything logically possible, both its existence and its nonexistence are metaphysically equivalent; therefore, there must necessarily be a determining or specifying force to give either option preponderance over the other. In addition to power, this implies *selection* and thus *the personal agency of free choice*; therefore, the efficient cause of the universe must have the divine attribute of will. As Craig explains:

> Thus, Ghāzāli [sic] argues that while it is true that no mechanical cause existing from eternity could create the universe in time, such a production of a temporal effect from an eternal cause is possible *if and only if* the cause is a personal agent who *wills* from eternity to create a temporally finite effect [italics added]. For while a mechanically operating set of necessary and sufficient conditions would either produce their effect from eternity or not at all, a personal being may freely choose to create at any time wholly apart from any distinguishing conditions of one moment from another. For it is the very function of will to distinguish like from like. Thus, on a Newtonian view of time, a personal being could choose from eternity to create the universe at any moment he pleased. On a relational view of time, he could will timelessly to create and that creation would mark the inception of time. Thus, Kant's antithesis, far from disproving the beginning of the universe, actually provides a dramatic illumination of the nature of the cause of the universe; for if the universe began to exist, and if the universe is caused, then the cause of the universe must be a personal being who freely chooses to create the world.[80]

Summation

To summarize, the minor premise of the KCA holds that the universe must have had a beginning in time because an infinite regress of events or moments is logically impossible, since actual infinities cannot obtain in any temporal realm, let alone be formed by successive addition. Cantorian set theory and Zeno's paradoxes of motion fail to prove the possibility of a beginningless cosmos; the infinite by definition cannot be traversed, irrespective of available time. Many objections to this analytic truth are based on the fallacy of confusing actual infinities with potential infinities—namely, the concept of the potentially infinite divisibility of or possibility of addition to a finite whole. A finite whole is always ontologically finite, despite conceptual allowance for further division or addition. In fact, time itself is ontologically finite.

The major premise of the KCA asserts the self-evident principle that anything with a beginning must necessarily have a cause—that is, a determiner that grants it existence. This principle is neither derived by induction nor a case of begging the question; it is axiomatic, for an "uncaused event" or "logically possible occurrence without determiner" is a metaphysical contradiction. Arguing for "brute facticity" merely avoids logical necessity. Bidirectional equations in physics, or the phenomenon of quantum indeterminacy, fail to demonstrate the metaphysical possibility of an uncaused event. Humean imagination also fails to demonstrate that possibility, as the contents of imagination allow for multiple labels of description. Moreover, any rebuttal of the principle of causality/determination itself relies on causation for its effects of producing a conclusion or of convincing an interlocutor.

The conclusion of the KCA is that the universe necessarily has an efficient cause, and that this efficient cause must transcend space-time, or temporality, since otherwise it too would be occurrent/temporal and thus caused, whereby infinite regress or

circular reasoning is not resolved. This reductio argument obviates the charge of passing the buck and disproves incoherent explanatory attempts, such as "something humanly inconceivable" and other vague notions, M-theory, and a causative value of goodness. (Even though the *reality* of the eternal Creator whose existence is deduced is ineffable and thus inconceivable for any temporal mind, still, certain rulings of divinity are logically deduced and therefore intelligible and necessary to affirm.) Only affirmation of the eternal efficient cause can metaphysically account for the universe. Because that cause is eternal and atemporal, its very essence must be existence—*what it is* entails *that it is*—wherefore the eternal cause is not self-caused but indeed necessarily existent. Nothing temporal can obtain for this entity; it is atemporal and thus without beginning or end. Moreover, the implications of its necessary existence include self-sufficiency, dissimilarity from all things temporal, and absolute uniqueness and unicity—the contraries of which would entail temporality and limitation, which in turn would necessitate another determining agent. The existence of the cosmos—or even one temporal thing, which by definition is logically possible—logically necessitates that the eternal cause have the attributes of power to give existence, will to select existence, knowledge of the thing brought into existence, and that which is presupposed for those three attributes (namely, life). Once His eternal attributes of knowledge, will, and power are affirmed, then it is necessary that their associations—what the Necessarily Existent knows, can choose, and can create—be universal in scope and unlimited, since any limitation would presuppose another determining agent and reopen the door to infinite regress. Of course, the attributes of will and power can pertain only to metaphysical possibilities, since impossibilities are inherently nonsensical, as are the opposites of necessities.

And pace Kant's attempt to disprove theism in his antithesis in the first antinomy of reason—namely, that a mechanical set of necessary and sufficient conditions would result either in an eternal world or no world at all, the former conclusion patently untenable, the latter empirically false—that antithesis in fact reinforces the only tenable explanation of the temporal world's existence—namely, that its divine Creator is a "personal being who freely chooses to create the world," who selected in eternity to create a temporal world. Lastly, revealed scripture also discloses that the Necessarily Existent possesses the attributes of speech, hearing, and sight. This then is the Muslim conception of God—in Arabic, *Allāh*—as articulated by the scholastics of Islamic philosophical theology (kalam): a conception that is wholly metaphysical, true by necessity, and deduced rationally, starting from the empirical observation of the world's mere existence.

ENDNOTES

1 See William Lane Craig, *The* Kalām *Cosmological Argument* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1979). Hereafter, TKCA.

2 In this argument, the term *universe* (in Arabic, *ʿālam*) denotes the entire cosmos, or "all that exists besides the divine." If one objects that this definition begs the question by invoking what the theist is attempting to prove (namely, the divine), an alternative definition is "all that exists contingently" or "the sum total of metaphysical possibilities that have actual existence." So it implicitly excludes that which has necessary existence—namely, the entity and attributes of God, the exalted. Lastly, a "multiverse," of which our universe would be but a part, would be included in the term *universe* as used in the KCA.

3 The focus of this essay is on philosophical arguments rather than scientific confirmation of its premises, such as Big Bang cosmology or the law of thermodynamics, both of which have revealed that the universe had a beginning. A philosophical argument that demonstrates its conclusion with certainty is preferred in the kalam tradition, given that scientific knowledge changes with new discoveries and new theorems to accommodate evolving data. Logical demonstration by valid syllogism, on the other

hand, is independent of changing data since it is founded upon *metaphysical* first principles that are axiomatic and remain true in any possible world.

4 What is meant here is the impossibility of an actual infinity obtaining in any aggregative structure, or any temporal realm of existence, which includes space-time and hence the cosmos. This is a crucial point, for some will object that the very conclusion of the KCA, that the eternal Creator exists, undermines its minor premise since it is based on the impossibility of actual infinities.

The KCA proponent will respond that no contradiction is entailed, since what the KCA proves as impossible is the existence of an actual infinity in any temporal or aggregative structure. God's existence, though, is fundamentally atemporal. He is eternal in the sense of being timeless, not in the sense of lasting an infinite duration of moments; there are no composite parts of an infinite number that constitute God's existence.

A similar objection is that the premise is contradicted by the theistic belief in the infinite knowledge of God, since He knows all things possible, necessary, and impossible, and those are infinite in number. Contemporary philosopher Wes Morriston makes this objection based on the infinitude of objects of God's knowledge, while contemporary mathematician John Byl does so based on the infinitude of what God knows of the unending events in the hereafter, as per Christian (and Islamic) creed. See Morriston, "Craig on the Actual Infinite," *Religious Studies* 38 (2002); Byl, "On the Kalam Cosmological Argument," *Facets of Faith and Science* 4 (1996).

The aforementioned response applies here too. As Imam al-Bājūrī comments after stating the Muslim tenet that God's knowledge has infinite associations, "And one cannot object to this with the impossibility of an actual infinity in existence, since what is rationally demonstrated [regarding the actual infinity] is its impossibility in what is temporal (*ḥādith*), not in what is itself eternal (*qadīm*)" (*Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 200). So the kalam scholastic affirms an actual infinity of "what God knows" and also affirms the logical impossibility of an actual infinity of anything temporally existent, whether entities, properties, events, moments, or a space-time continuum. This entails no contradiction. In Islamic creed, besides God Himself (who is eternal) and that which God creates (which is altogether finite and temporal), the objects of God's knowledge have no actual existence. Moreover, there is no linearity or progression to "what God knows" since no temporality obtains with God's entity or attributes, for God is timeless. God does not

"mentally run through" the objects of His knowledge, one after another, ad infinitum. Rather, His knowledge is one eternal attribute of transparency (*inkishāf*), with infinite associations. It is only the human mind that, when contemplating God's knowledge, envisions each association one at a time. Also, the contradictions identified regarding actual infinities in a temporal realm/aggregative structure, such as Hilbert's hotel and Craig's library (see note #7), prove absurd *only* when one or more members are added to or subtracted from the infinity. Such mathematical operations, however, cannot obtain with "what God knows" since no object is unknown to Him such that it can be added to His knowledge, nor can anything known to Him be removed from His knowledge. Yet in any temporal realm that is actually existent, such as our cosmos, things can certainly be added to or removed from larger sets/groups. Finally, the infinity of integers also does not actually exist extra-mentally but is nonexistent and subsumed in the broader category of what God knows.

Throughout this essay, then, whenever the impossibility of actual infinities is invoked, what is meant is its impossibility in any temporal realm—that is, in actual extra-mental existence, which includes our cosmos or any temporal and changeable universe. The existence of God is categorically different: He is not an actual infinity of parts or encompassed by an actual infinity of moments; rather, He is eternal, without beginning or end, transcendent above space-time and any conceivable change, absolutely one and unique, and necessarily existent. His very entity is pure being, without any parts or partnership, and thus dissimilar to all things temporal.

5 Craig, *TKCA*, 69–102.

6 An *actual infinity* is defined here as "any collection having at a time t a number of definite and discrete members that is greater than any natural number {0, 1, 2, 3, ...}." A *potential infinity* is "a set that possesses at time t a number of discrete members that is equal to some natural number, yet over time increases without end toward infinity as a limit." See J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 470.

7 This paradox is exemplified by Hilbert's hotel (and similarly, Craig's library). For example, consider a hotel with a finite number of rooms, all of which are filled. If a new guest arrives asking for a room, then clearly there is no room for him, and he must go elsewhere. Now consider a hotel with an infinite number of rooms, *all of which are filled*. Again, there is no

vacant room in the entire hotel. However, if a new guest arrives, the hotel can arrange for every current guest to move over one room (the person in room #1 shifts to room #2, the person in room #2 to room #3, and so on, to infinity). Now room #1 is available for the new guest, who happily checks in. Yet the rooms were full prior to his arrival. Moreover, according to the mathematicians of set theory, the total number of guests has not changed at all; just as before, it is now still infinity. So two contradictions are entailed by an actual infinity in temporal reality: the complete set having "room" for an additional member, and the totality of members not changing despite the addition to it.

These contradictions can be underscored by imagining not one but an infinite number of new guests arriving at the hotel: every current guest can be shifted to a room number that is double his current room number (the person in room #1 to room #2, the person in room #2 to room #4, the person in room #3 to room #6, etc.), such that all prior guests now occupy only the even-numbered rooms, which are infinite. This leaves the odd-numbered rooms vacant, also infinite and hence allowing for all infinite numbers of new guests to check in. Of course, before they arrived, all of the hotel's rooms had been full, and as in the prior scenario, the total number of guests has *not* increased despite the additional infinite number of guests. In fact, this same scenario could be repeated an infinite number of times thereafter.

Moreover, reversing these scenarios shows that, like the arithmetic function of addition, subtraction also entails contradictions if applied to an actual infinite set. Yet as is obvious, addition and subtraction are valid operations in any possible temporal world. And considering that the same absurdities ensue regardless of the type of structure involved (hotel, library, etc.), the illustration shows how an actual infinity simply cannot obtain in any spatial-temporal reality. See Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations*, 471–73.

Furthermore, as with the debate about the existence of universals, there are different philosophical schools on the existence of mathematical entities in general (such as numbers and sets). According to nominalism and conceptualism, mathematical entities have no existence in the real world; according to formalism as well, they have no extra-mental existence since they merely comprise formalized systems, which must be consistent to be valid yet lack any ontological relevance; according to Platonism,

however, mathematical entities do have existence outside the mind. Of these schools, only the latter would posit the existence of infinity outside the mind. Yet as noted with the antinomies discovered in set theory and with the patent contradictions that are entailed in any temporal actual infinity (as evinced by the example of Hilbert's hotel), a Platonistic view of a temporally existent infinity is untenable. See Craig, TKCA, 87–89.

However, contemporary philosopher J. P. Moreland has argued that even Platonism is compatible with the KCA, given that the absurdities of a temporal actual infinity arise only when, as seen with Hilbert's hotel, (1) addition or subtraction can be performed to the set and (2) the set is posited as spatial-temporally extended (both of which of course obtain in our world and in any possible temporal realm). See J. P. Moreland, "A Response to a Platonistic and to a Set-Theoretic Objection to the Kalam Cosmological Argument," *Religious Studies* 39, no. 4 (2003): 373–90.

Therefore, Moreland contends that a Platonist could adhere to the existence of an actual infinity without those two features (1 and 2 above). To be sure, while Platonism certainly contravenes the Islamic belief of God's oneness, or "the oneness of the Eternal," it is remarkable that neither of those two features obtains in the theistic tenet of "the infinite associations of God's knowledge." Besides God Himself (who necessarily exists and who is known to Him), the objects of divine knowledge have no *existence* unless God chooses to *create* something possible that He atemporally knows. However, some have objected to the KCA's premise (that the existence of actual infinities entails absurdities) by trying to apply those absurdities to "what God knows." The response is that (1) the infinite possibilities that God knows have no actual existence unless He creates it, and what He creates is finite, and as mentioned here, (2) the features that lead to contradictions with actual infinities (addition and subtraction) do not obtain with "what God knows." See Moreland, "A Response," 373–90.

8 al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, 102–5; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd*, 133–34. Imam al-Taftāzānī also notes the distinction mentioned in the earlier endnote (#4) between (1) the impossibility of an actual infinity in any temporal continuum and (2) the affirmed actual infinity of all integers, of what God knows, and of what God can possibly create. None of the latter exist in time.

9 Bernard Bolzano, *Paradoxes of the Infinite*, trans. Fr. Prihonsky (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), 84, cited in Craig, TKCA, 70. However,

while it is metaphysically impossible for an actual infinity to obtain in any space-time continuum, the *notion* of infinity may very well prove useful for set theory. As Craig admits, "Our case against the existence of the actual infinite says nothing about the use of the idea of the infinite in conceptual mathematics" (87).

10 Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1919), 135–38.

11 David Hilbert, "On the Infinite," in *Philosophy of Mathematics*, ed. Paul Benacerraf and Hilary Putnam (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 134–51.

12 See Robert Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 202–3. Spitzer cites Hilbert's telling conclusion: "Our principal result is that the infinite is nowhere to be found in reality. It neither exists in nature nor provides a legitimate basis for rational thought—a remarkable harmony between being and thought.... The role that remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea [i.e., a potential infinity]" ("On the Infinite," 151).

13 Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2004), 138–39.

14 Ironically, Smith contends that it is G. J. Whitrow (d. 2000), whom he attempts to rebut, who commits the fallacy of equivocation with the terms *actual infinity* and *potential infinity*. Yet the two descriptions Whitrow gives of an actual infinity are both applicable and true of that notion, while Smith uses a diagram/concept that represents a potential infinity to prove an actual infinity of past events, as described above. See William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 78–80.

15 Smith's rejoinder to this point is to suggest that (1) an infinite series could be written in an infinite period of time, which as discussed later in the above essay is false, given that an actual infinity cannot be traversed *irrespective of the amount of time available*, and (2) our mental inability to count from zero backwards to infinity is but an empirical limitation of the human mind, while "a *logically possible counter* could have been counting at every moment in the past *in the order* in which the past events occurred." Here he has called a logical contradiction (the occurrence of an actual infinity of

past events) a mere "empirical limitation" and purports to solve the limitation by envisioning a "logically possible" device that could measure what is inherently contradictory. See Craig and Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology*, 91.

This solution, applied for example to the impossibility of a square being a circle, is like asserting that our certainty that an object cannot be a square and a circle (at the same time and from the same vantage point) is merely an empirical limitation of the mind, while a *logically possible* "mind that could affirm a square-circle" could in fact affirm its possibility. Better yet, we could say that our certainty that Smith's position on this issue differs from that of the KCA is based on an empirical limitation of the mind, while a *logically possible* "mind that could see Smith's position as identical to that of the KCA" could in fact see them as identical, in which case Smith actually concurs with the KCA that a beginningless universe is logically impossible. Calling something "logically possible" does not make it so: just as the hypothetical minds of the latter two examples are absurd, so too is Smith's hypothetical counter that could begin counting at negative infinity and arrive at zero.

16 Contemporary philosopher R. J. Hankinson explains,

> Aristotle is, in a variety of senses, a finitist. He rejects the idea that there can be actualized infinite sets of things, including, it appears, the natural numbers (Aristotle argues that mathematicians do not require it: *Phys* 3 7, 207b28 ff.). This causes him some difficulties with time, since he holds the world to be without beginning, and hence must (in some sense) allow that there have been infinitely many days prior to this one—moreover, there must have been an infinite number of rotations of the heavenly bodies. However, "time and motion are indeed infinite, as is thought; but the parts that are taken do not persist" (*Phys* 3 8, 208a20–21); there exists *now* no infinite collection of present moments.

Again, though, Aristotle does assert the difference between potential and actual infinities, as Hankinson later states: "Thus he allows the number-series to be in a way infinite, by introducing the notion of a potential infinity. For any number you can always take one larger than it, although it doesn't follow for Aristotle that there must exist an actual infinite set of numbers. People have erred, he says, in assuming the infinite to be that which

includes everything [i.e., an actual infinity]—rather, the infinite [i.e., a potential infinity] is such that no matter how much you have of it, you can always take something more (*Phys* 3 6, 206b33–207a14.; cf. 206b16ff.; *Cael* 1 5, 271b33ff.)." See Hankinson, "Science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 140–41.

17 While Aquinas did maintain that the universe had a beginning, he argued that its beginning could not be demonstrated philosophically, based on his reasoning explained above in the essay. In the first of his Five Ways in *Summa Theologiae* (I.46.2)—the proof from motion—he famously distinguished between two types of causal series: those ordered per accidents, or "accidentally," which are linearly extended through time, and those ordered per se, or "essentially," which are hierarchical and thus act simultaneously. The infinite regress entailed by a past infinity of events in the universe is of the former type, and Aquinas thought such a regress was theoretically possible (yet not factually true), as opposed to an infinite regress of events causally ordered per se. See Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Oneworld, 2009), 70–71; Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae: *A Guide and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 113.

18 Craig, *TKCA*, 96.

19 See note #4 for John Byl's related objection and its response. Wes Morriston contends that the notion of a beginningless past is no different from that of an endless future. He admits that the former *has occurred*, while the latter *will occur*, yet asks, "What difference could a mere change of tense make?" The answer, of course, is *actuality*, which at any moment has obtained with what *has* occurred, but has not obtained with what *will* occur. One could also say *completion*: a beginningless past is completed with the present moment, though an actual infinity by definition cannot be completed, while an endless future is by definition never completed. (See also note #21 on the dynamic versus static theories of time.) See Morriston, "Beginningless Past, Endless Future, Actual Infinite," *Faith and Philosophy* 27 (2010): 439–50.

20 Craig, *TKCA*, 102–10.

21 The argument presupposes a dynamic/tensed/A-theory of time, as opposed to a static/tenseless/B-theory. The former asserts that time is characterized by objective tense determinations (past, present, future), while the latter asserts that time is ordered only by tenseless relations (earlier than,

simultaneous with, later than). According to B-theory, past, present, and future all coexist in one infinite space-time block; therefore, the universe has no beginning, since nothing has a beginning. All of time exists at once as a fourth dimension to space, with all moments (past, present, future) being equally existent rather than sequentially coming into existence. *Change* on the tenseless theory is not something that transpires but is merely a difference of position or coordinates on the space-time continuum. (Even according to B-theory, however, the contingency argument holds force, as the universe is still possible/contingent and hence can be explained only by asserting a necessary being as its cause.)

To support the A-theory, Craig uses arguments from tensed language and from the experience of tense. A-theorists argue that tensed language (e.g., "It is now 5 p.m.") ascribes real, ontological tenses to time, and that, based on the correspondence view of truth, the ascription is factual and so reality itself is tensed. Pace early B-theorists (such as Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege, W. V. O. Quine [d. 2000], and Hans Reichenbach [d. 1953]), Craig shows that tensed sentences are irreducible to tenseless sentences without loss of meaning. And pace later B-theorists, such as D. H. Mellor, he demonstrates that the tensed nature of human language has ontological implications for the nature of time and events (or things) therein.

Moreover, Craig shows that the human experience of tense, universal to all individuals, confirms the reality of tense and of temporal becoming, while McTaggart's (d. 1925) paradox and the myth of temporal passage are fallacious objections to the A-theory of time. See Craig, *The Tensed Theory of Time: A Critical Examination* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000). See also the discussion later in the essay on the finitude of ontological time. Finally, for an examination of arguments for and objections to the B-theory of time, see Craig, *The Tenseless Theory of Time: A Critical Examination* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2010).

22 See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 410–34; Craig, TKCA, 19–41.

23 The traditional kalam view would seem to correspond to St. Augustine's famous dictum "The world was made, not in time, but *with* time." St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.6, quoted in Wolfgang Smith, *Science and Myth: With a Response to Stephen Hawking's* The Grand Design (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press/Sophia Perennis, 2012), 190.

24 See Aristotle, *Physics VIII*, 1, 251b, 18–26, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 357. Kant poses a similar view in the antithesis of his first antinomy of pure reason, saying in his observation on the antithesis, "Space, it further follows, whether full or empty, may be limited by appearances, but appearances cannot be limited *by an empty space* outside them. This is likewise true of time. But while all this may be granted, it yet cannot be denied that these two non-entities, empty space outside the world and empty time prior to it, have to be assumed if we are to assume a limit to the world in space and in time." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 400.

Interestingly enough, Aristotle mentions immediately before the above passage from *Physics* that the ancient Greeks unanimously considered time eternal, although with the one exception of Plato: "Plato alone asserts the creation of time, saying that it had a becoming together with the universe, the universe according to him having had a becoming." (The editor, McKeon, notes that Aristotle here is thinking of a passage in the *Timaeus* [38B].) As discussed above, this is also the position of the Sunni theologians—namely, that both space and time had a simultaneous event of inception, prior to which neither existed (the word *prior* here indicating not a former temporal reality but rather a former/distinct ontological status.)

25 See Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā': Al-Ṭabīʿiyyāt (al-samāʿ al-ṭabīʿī)*, ed. S. Zāyid (Cairo: The General Egyptian Book Organization, n.d.), II.11, 155–56. As with Aristotle, Avicenna's reasoning begs the question by assuming what he is attempting to prove, for in his reductio argument against creation ex nihilo, he regards what is "prior to" creation as temporally prior, while those who argue for the inception of the world deem it to be ontologically prior.

26 See, for example, Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 39–76.

27 Craig, TKCA, 108.

28 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2000), 117.

29 Craig, TKCA, 175–202.

30 Aristotle, *Physics* VI, 9, 239b, 11, 15, 357.

31 Aristotle, *Physics* VI, 2, 233a, 21–32, 320.

32 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 387–401.

33 Similarly, in his article "The Age and Size of the World," contemporary philosopher Jonathan Bennett attempts to rebut Kant's thesis, stating,

> A series of the sort Kant has in mind must, if it is infinite, be open at one end; it cannot have both a first and a last member; and so the enumeration of its members, *if started*, 'can never be completed'. But such an enumeration could be completed all the same, if it did not ever start but had been going on for ever [*sic*].
>
> Let 'T' name a known point in past time, say the moment when you began reading this paper. Then Kant's argument can be put thus: the series of events-before-T' was completed at T; events could in principle be counted as they occur; and so a counting or enumeration of the series of events-before-T could have been completed at T; and so the series of events-before-T' does not have infinitely many members. But—the obvious objection runs—that final step is not valid, or anyway Kant hasn't shown that it is. For he hasn't displayed any incoherence in the idea that at T someone, said 'T minus 0', and a minute earlier said 'T minus 1', and so on—through every event-before-T, there being no earliest such event. (*Synthese* 23 [1971]: 127–28)

Here, Bennett has made the same critical error described above of treating an actual infinity (which a past infinity would entail) as a potential infinity. He presents a mental conception of counting *forward to infinity*, which is a potential infinity—always finite yet always capable of addition—in the guise of occurring *backwards to infinity* ("someone said 'T minus 0', and a minute earlier said 'T minus 1', and so on"), which presupposes a completed actual infinity. Clearly, though, simply labeling something with "minus" does not render it actualized, *actuality* being the critical difference between past and future.

34 See Bertrand Russell, "Lecture VI: The Problem of Infinity Considered Historically," *Our Knowledge of the External World: As a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1949), 161. This mistake is also the basis of Russell's example (from Laurence Sterne's [d. 1768] novel) of the autobiography of Tristram Shandy, who writes so slowly that it takes him one year to write the events of one day: Russell asserts that the impossibility of Shandy completing the novel is due to the author's mortality. So if Shandy were immortal, he could conceivably finish it, despite that

constant rate of writing, since by one-to-one correspondence, each day would correspond to each year, and both sets are infinite. See Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937), 358–60. See text above for the rebuttal to this reasoning.

35 Craig, *TKCA*, 104.

36 See Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, 181–215.

37 Aristotle, *Physics* IV, 12, 221a, 1, 294.

38 See, for example, Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos*, 39–76.

39 This principle necessarily applies to any possible universe, which Sunni scholastics termed temporal (*ḥādith*), as opposed to eternal and atemporal (*qadīm*), an attribute that by necessity applies only to God, the exalted. See discussion below.

40 See, for example, Kamāl al-Dīn b. Abī Sharīf, *Kitāb al-musāmarah fī sharḥ al-musāyarah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2002), 29.

41 William L. Rowe (d. 2015) has questioned its applicability to the notion that every change requires an efficient cause, arguing that change could be accounted for by mere brute facticity. See Rowe, *The Cosmological Argument* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975; reprint, New York: Fordham University, 1998), 17. See also Garrett J. DeWeese and Joshua Rasmussen, "Hume and the *Kalam* Cosmological Argument," in *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post-Humean Assessment*, ed. James F. Sennett and Douglas Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 123–49. DeWeese and Rasmussen agree with Rowe that some particles could have within them a "principle of change."

This view is contrary to the classical Sunni doctrine of occasionalism, which can be inferred from the KCA conclusion, in its discussion on the universal scope of associations of divine power. Rationally, one could also resort to a form of Leibniz's (d. 1716) principle of sufficient reason to rebut the view, as Rowe himself recognizes. Also, any change is logically possible, so conceptually the essence of that change itself cannot account for its existence. Thus, for the change to occur, there must be a giver of preponderance to select and give preponderance to its being over its nonbeing.

42 Richard Swinburne has argued that the causal principle needs inductive justification. See Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 139. See also al-Taftāzānī's explanation above.

43 See Trent Horn, *Answering Atheism: How to Make the Case for God with Logic and Charity* (San Diego, CA: Catholic Answers Press, 2013), 252–55. Horn also rebuts the claim that the KCA commits the fallacy of equivocation in the phrase "begins to exist," in that its usage in the minor premise is in the context of inception from nothing, while its usage in the major premise is in the context of inception from a prior state of matter/energy. Horn's response is that the phrase can be changed to a univocal phrase—namely, "begins to exist at a certain time and never existed before that time." It is a moot point that according to the KCA there was no time before the universe began, as this univocal phrase still holds true. Interestingly enough, the Sunni scholastic would argue that the original phrase, "begins to exist," is univocal, given that its usage in the major premise is also in the context of inception from nothing, despite the prior existence of matter/energy. This is because according to Sunni occasionalism, God creates every event directly from nothing and not *through* any prior matter/energy. The prior arrangement of matter/energy that is empirically identified as the event's "cause" is theologically identified as merely the locus for the divine fiat.

44 See Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd b. ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* (Qom: Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1989), 1:481–82.

The term *preponderance* (*tarajjuḥ*) in this context signifies one state outweighing another, so that it prevails—as if a balance that has equal weights on each scale is tipped in one direction. The above argument holds it to be self-evident that such preponderance cannot obtain without a giver of preponderance (*murajjiḥ*), or force that tips the balance to one side. Applied to ontology, the principle holds that no logically possible thing can exist without a giver of preponderance of its existence over its nonexistence.

Also, the reality of the causal principle is that only a possible thing's *existence* actually needs a cause, since the default ontological state of anything possible is nonexistence. Technically, the act of causation (i.e., creation) is to give preponderance to a possible thing's existence over its nonexistence. While conceptually its existence and its nonexistence are equivalent, in actuality it is nonexistent unless it is created. This consideration is expressed by the Ashʿarī scholar Imam al-Dardīr, who notes that because the default ontological state of any possible thing is nonexistence, the preponderance required for its existence is even greater than normally conceived. That is, the balance must be tipped from actual nonexistence to actual existence, not from possible existence to actual existence. The possible existence of

something simply means it cannot exist without being caused to exist. See al-Dardīr, *Sharḥ al-kharīdah al-bahiyyah*, 46.

45 For a transcript of the entire debate, see *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion*, ed. Al Seckel (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986), 123–46. For the quoted text, see page 131.

46 Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 135.

47 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995), 528.

48 See Bertrand Russell, "On the Notion of Cause, with Applications to the Free-Will Problem," in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Herbert Feigl and May Brodbeck (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), 387–407.

49 See Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics*, 114–27.

50 Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2013), 264.

51 See, for example, Sheldon Goldstein, "Bohmian Mechanics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2013, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/qm-bohm/. See also Jim Baggott, *The Quantum Story: A History in 40 Moments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 299–305; Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*, 245–52; and Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 102–20. In any case, as noted above, such debates remain in the purview of physics, yet have no bearing on metaphysics.

52 Excerpt taken from Albert's book review of Lawrence Krauss's *A Universe from Nothing: Why There is Something Rather than Nothing*. See http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/books/review/a-universe-from-nothing-by-lawrence-m-krauss.html.

53 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56.

54 For a discussion of Malebranche's views on causation and arguments for occasionalism, see, for example, Walter Ott, *Causation and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 81–101.

55 G. E. M. Anscombe, "'Whatever Has a Beginning of Existence Must Have a Cause': Hume's Argument Exposed," *Analysis* 34 (1974): 150.

56 Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics*, 112–13.

57 See *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1932), 1:187, quoted in Craig, TKCA , 168, where Hume states in a letter to John Stewart, February 1754, "But allow me to tell you that I never asserted so absurd a Proposition as *that anything might arise without a cause*: I only maintain'd, that our Certainty of the Falsehood of that Proposition proceeded neither from Intuition nor Demonstration; but from another Source." The *Treatise* was published in 1739/40.

58 Horn, *Answering Atheism*, 249.

59 al-Lāmishī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, 49–50.

60 Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2012), 180.

61 Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking*, 29–31.

62 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 57.

63 Quoted in Horn, *Answering Atheism*, 137–38.

64 John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 17, 47. This book is a compelling rebuttal of the new atheism and its scientistic pretensions.

65 Hawking, *The Grand Design*, 5.

66 Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking*, 31. For another cogent refutation of Hawking's influential book, see Smith, *Science and Myth*, 156–200.

67 al-Lāmishī, *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, 49–50.

68 For example, contemporary philosopher Rebecca Goldstein objects,

> Who caused God? The Cosmological Argument is a prime example of the Fallacy of Passing the Buck: invoking God to solve some problem, but then leaving unanswered that very same problem when applied to God himself. The proponent of the Cosmological Argument must admit a contradiction to either his first premise—and say that though God exists, he doesn't have a cause—or else a contradiction to his third premise—and say that God is self-caused. Either way, the theist is saying that his premises have at least one exception, but is not explaining why God must be the unique exception, otherwise than asserting his unique mystery (the Fallacy of Using One Mystery To

Pseudo-Explain Another). Once you admit of exceptions, you can ask why the universe itself, which is also unique, can't be the exception. The universe itself can either exist without a cause, or else can be self-caused. Since the buck has to stop somewhere, why not with the universe?" (*36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction* [Toronto: Vintage Books, 2011], 445–504)

The reason for her objection is that the cosmological argument to which she is responding has for its first premise "everything that exists must have a cause," and against that premise her objection is valid. The objection echoes that of many philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell, who contends, "If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it may just as well be the world as God, so that there cannot be any validity in that argument" (*Why I Am Not a Christian, and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957], 6–7).

However, that version of the cosmological argument is a straw man. The KCA's major premise asserts instead, "Everything *that has a beginning* necessarily has an efficient cause." Far from passing the buck, the KCA merely affirms the categorical distinction between what is *temporal/occurrent/with a beginning*, which must necessarily have an external efficient cause, and what is *atemporal/eternal/without a beginning*, which by definition cannot be caused, since its very essence is to exist. God, the exalted, is the only atemporal entity; He is necessarily existent. Also note that "necessary existence" differs from being "self-caused," a contradictory notion that is nowhere asserted in the KCA. And the reason the universe (or any of its features) cannot be necessarily existent is (1) it had a beginning and (2) its nonexistence is conceptually conceivable. The specificity of the universe and of all its features clearly evinces its possibility and lack of necessity. See quote by Stephen M. Barr above.

69 Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, 135. Also, Scruton (following Kant) contends that the necessary existence of the Creator is assumed and not proven in the cosmological argument, and that the latter therefore relies on the ontological argument of St. Anselm (d. 1109) and others. Yet the cosmological argument of the kalam tradition does not rely on the ontological argument. Its own conclusion, based on the impossibility of an infinite regress of temporal and contingent causes, is the existence of the eternal and necessarily existent Creator.

70 Craig and Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology*, 183.

71 The deduction of the KCA could be achieved with any possible world or any possible existent, not just this cosmos. Were a sophist to object that one cannot be certain that this world exists, since it is external to oneself and known by the senses, which we ultimately trust, the KCA can still get off the ground by the existence of one's very consciousness and thoughts, which are temporally existent. And the temporal perforce signifies the eternal. Yet it goes without saying that the divine existence and attributes are known with further clarity in light of teleological arguments that highlight the wonders and benefits imbued in this particular universe. The KCA, however, does not rely on any argument by design.

72 An oft-cited example of a metaphysical impossibility that is therefore not associated with divine power is "a rock so heavy that God could not lift it." Such a notion is meaningless and rationally incoherent, since a rock by definition occupies space, and God as creator of all temporal things is creator of space and its contents. Hence, He may create a rock and subsequently re-create it in any space He chooses, which if vertical to the onlooker is termed "lifting." So any rock can be lifted by God, irrespective of the rock's weight. Thus, the notion of "a rock so heavy that God could not lift it" is self-contradictory, like the notion of a "square circle" or "four-sided triangle" or "rock that is not a rock." It signifies nothing and by definition is not performable in any sense. God's omnipotence is associated with all things possible, not with rational absurdities or with metaphysical necessities whose opposites are such absurdities.

73 These arguments are dealt with in more detail in the text of *Al-Bidāyah*.

74 See DeWeese and Rasmussen, "Hume and the *Kalam* Cosmological Argument," 123–49.

75 David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Richard H. Popkin, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998), 37–38.

76 P. C. W. Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 222.

77 Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*, 264–65.

78 Epicurus contends, "When we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other, and can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities, but what are exactly sufficient to produce

the effect.... But if we ascribe to it farther qualities, or affirm it capable of producing other effects, we can only indulge the licence of conjecture, and arbitrarily suppose the existence of qualities and energies, without reason or authority" (Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 102–3).

As noted above, far from arbitrary conjecture, reason necessitates the universal scope of divine power, since otherwise the Divine would be temporal and limited, and one returns to the original absurdity of infinite regress regarding the origin of the universe. So God must be eternal and without constraint in His attributes. Thus, Epicurus's line of reasoning can apply only to temporal and contingent (secondary) causes, not to the eternal and absolute creator of all.

79 Sunni scholastics also emphasize that these thirteen necessary attributes of the Divine by no means limit His majesty, since His perfections are infinite (meaning, without end). However, only some of those perfections have been disclosed to humanity, whether through logical deduction or through scripture. Thus, humans are responsible only to affirm (1) the conclusions of sound logical deduction, which as shown in the KCA are these thirteen necessary divine attributes, along with (2) whatever sublime names and attributes of God that He has revealed through scripture and (3) the general creedal tenet that His perfections are infinite. See al-Dardīr, *Sharḥ al-kharīdah al-bahiyyah*, 48.

80 Craig, TKCA, 151.

APPENDIX B

Descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ

IN THE SECTION titled "On Evidence of the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ," the author of *Al-Bidāyah* adduces, among other signs, descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ given by some of the people around him, inferring that "all of this serves as evidence, for those who possess keen discernment (*firāsah*), that the likes of such qualities have never been gathered in any one person before him or after him, thereby indicating the nobility of his entity and the loftiness of his person, such that no one matches him therein." Since the author only alludes to the descriptions, their translation is provided here.

The Narrations of Hind b. Abī Hālah and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib

It is related[1] that al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī said: I asked my maternal uncle, Hind b. Abī Hālah, who was masterful in describing the beauteous traits of the Prophet ﷺ, for a description of God's Messenger ﷺ, and I was yearning for a description that I could hold fast to. He responded:

> God's Messenger ﷺ was truly eminent and venerable.[2] His face glistened like the full moon on a dark night. He was taller than average yet not lanky. His head was large,[3] and his hair somewhat wavy [neither curly nor straight]. If his hair parted naturally, he would leave it parted, otherwise he would leave it unparted. When he let it grow out, his hair would reach below his earlobes. He was of fair and luminous complexion. His forehead was wide, and his eyebrows were

long, arched, and even, without being conjoined. Between the two eyebrows was a vein that would pulsate when he was angered.[4] He had a thin, aquiline nose, with a light at its apex; someone not looking carefully might deem it to be more prominent than it was [because of its luminosity]. He had a full and thick beard, neither too thin nor too long. His eyes were stunningly dark [meaning the iris, surrounded by intensely white sclera]; his cheeks were smooth and even; his mouth was moderately wide;[5] and his teeth were pearly white, with a small gap between the front two teeth. He had a thin line of hair between his chest and navel. His neck was [so balanced, pure, and fair in complexion, that it was] like the neck of a sculpted work of art made of pure silver.

All his limbs were perfectly balanced. His frame was full and solid, and his chest and stomach were even, for the latter did not at all protrude. His chest was prominent, his shoulders broad, and his joints large. He was altogether radiant.

Between the bottom of his neck and his navel was a thin line of hair, while the rest of his torso had no hair; he had some hair on the forearms, shoulders, and very top of the chest. His forearms were long, as were all his limbs; his palms were wide, and the flesh of his palms and feet thick. The muscles in his forearms and shins were without knots. The soles of his feet were well arched. His feet were supple and smooth, so soft that water, if poured upon them, would flow right off.

When he walked, he raised his legs with force and leaned forward in the direction of his gait [that is, he walked with purpose yet with balance and humility]. He walked in large, graceful strides [without dragging his feet or slamming them onto the ground], calmly treading the earth with dignity and composure. Still, his pace was naturally swift, as if descending from a slope. When he turned to face someone [on either side of him or behind him], he would turn with his entire body [rather than turning only his head]. His gaze was naturally lowered; he looked toward the earth for longer periods than toward the sky. Most of his looking up [at worldly matters] was by short, quick

glances [due to the depth of his contemplative state and lack of greed or keenness for worldly goods].

He never allowed his companions to walk behind him.[6] When he met someone, he always initiated the greetings of peace (*salām*).

[Al-Ḥasan ﷺ continued:] I said: Describe his speech to me. He replied:

God's Messenger ﷺ was constantly aware and concerned [over the welfare of others] and was in perpetual contemplation. He had no idle time. He never spoke without need, and his periods of silence were lengthy. He began and ended his speaking with the ends of his blessed mouth.[7] He spoke with few words that encompassed vast meaning, with clarity, truth, and exact precision; his speech was never excessive, boring, devoid of benefit, or insufficient in yielding benefit.

He was of easy disposition, never rude or demeaning towards anyone. He venerated blessings, even if seemingly trivial. He never criticized anything [let alone a person]. He did not complain about food or drink nor praise it.[8]

If someone transgressed a divine mandate, nothing could restrain his anger until he rectified the wrong; yet he was never angered for his own right, nor did he seek to redress a personal affront.

When he indicated something by gesture, he did so with his entire palm, and when he marveled at something, he turned his palm towards the sky [otherwise maintaining a calm, composed demeanor].[9] When he spoke, he conjoined [and punctuated] his discourse by [gesturing with his hand,] striking his left palm with his right thumb.[10]

If angry at someone, he turned away from the person [without criticism, due to his profound clemency]. When joy befell him, he closed his eyes and lowered his gaze [and his blessed head].[11] Most of his laughter was but smiling [without making noise], yet he would show his blessed teeth, which appeared like [exquisite] hailstones.

[Al-Ḥasan ﵁ continued:] I kept [this description] hidden from [my younger brother] al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī ﵁ for some time. Then, finally, I informed him of it, only to find he had beaten me to it! For he had asked [our] father [ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib ﵁] about the way God's Messenger ﷺ would enter, exit, and sit—and about his gatherings, his overall appearance, and the way he was with others—and [our father] omitted no detail whatsoever: al-Ḥusayn ﵁ said, "I asked [our] father about the way God's Messenger ﷺ would enter. He replied:

> His entering [the home] was for his personal needs [and to be with his family] and was with general divine permission. So, when he returned home, he divided his time into three portions: a portion for God, the exalted [in extra worship and devotion]; a portion for his family [to serve them with kindness and guidance]; and a portion for himself. Moreover, he divided his own portion between himself and the community, and the benefit he provided in that time would reach the general public [who could not attend] by means of the elect [who were able to attend, for they would convey to them what they learned from him]. He withheld nothing whatsoever from them.
>
> As for the portion he gave for the community [taken out of his personal portion], it was his custom to give people of virtue higher priority with respect to meeting with community members in his home, for which he gave permission; he divided his time among them based on their level of piety. And among them were individuals with one need, and some with two, and some with many. So, he was preoccupied with helping them, and he directed them to that which would rectify their affairs, along with the affairs of the entire community, since he also asked about the needs of others [who were absent] and then informed those in attendance about what most fulfilled the needs of those who were absent. He said, "Let he who is present among you convey [my counsel] to him who is absent. And all of you, convey to me any need of those unable to tell me of their needs, for indeed, whoever informs his leader of a need of someone who

himself cannot inform of it, God shall make firm his two feet [to safely cross the bridge over hell and enter paradise] on the Day of Arising."

Nothing but the likes of [what entailed helping people, guiding them, and fulfilling their needs] was mentioned in his presence; he would not accept from anyone [anything] other than that.

"[ʿAlī ﷺ] said [according to the narration of Sufyān b. Wakīʿ (d. 247/861)], 'They entered as seekers [of help and wisdom] but did not disperse except having tasted [prophetic wisdom and virtue]; they left as guides—that is, people with sound understanding of the religion.'

"I [al-Ḥusayn ﷺ then] said, 'So tell me of his exit; how did he behave when leaving [the home]?' [ʿAlī ﷺ] replied:

God's Messenger ﷺ refrained from speaking, except on matters that benefitted others. He bound hearts to him and to each other; he did not cause discord among them or drive them away from him. He honored the noble and distinguished individuals among every people and gave them leadership over their people. He was cautious when dealing with people and safeguarded himself from them, yet without denying anyone his cheerful countenance and good character. He checked up on his companions and asked people about the welfare of those who were absent [out of concern, in order to fulfill their needs].

He showed [with wisdom and moderation] the beauty and correctness of what is good and the vileness and emptiness of what is evil. His behavior was always balanced and perfect, never extreme or inconsistent. He was never inattentive to others, out of concern that they might be inattentive or bored [with the guidance he taught them]. For every possible circumstance, he was already prepared and focused. He was never remiss with fulfilling rights nor excessive beyond their due. Those nearest to him were the best of the community. The noblest of people, according to him, were those whose genuine concern [for God, for scripture, for the Messenger ﷺ, and for others] was most encompassing; the people of the highest rank, according to him, were those best at supporting and empowering others.

Then [al-Ḥusayn ﷺ] said, "So I asked [ʿAlī ﷺ] about his sitting and his behavior in gatherings. He replied:

> God's Messenger ﷺ did not sit or stand, except with the remembrance of God, the exalted. He did not designate for himself a certain place to sit and forbade others from doing so. When he joined a gathering, he sat at its end [or wherever he found space easily], and he enjoined others to do the same. He gave every person in the gathering his due, to the extent that everyone present did not think anyone else was more special to the Prophet ﷺ. He was extraordinarily patient with whomever sat or stood with him to discuss a personal need, waiting until the one in need excused himself and left. He did not send back whomever asked him for help with a matter, without having fulfilled it or without offering some kind words of facilitation [and supplication].
>
> His magnanimity and [loving] personality enveloped people, so he became for them like a true father, and they like relatives, all equivalent in receiving their due [of his warmth and tenderness], differing in rank only by virtue of how well they conformed to the sacred law. His gathering was one of forbearance [with dignity and tranquility], modesty, patience, and safeguarding people's honor. Voices were not raised therein, and [because no one was spoken ill of,] the sanctity of others was not offended. The mistakes of people that may have occurred in his gatherings were not spread as rumors or gossip. They loved and cared for one another, based on devotion to God, the exalted, each attendee lowering himself in humility to the others. They honored the elders and were tender with the children. They aided those in need and showed mercy to strangers and travelers.

Then [al-Ḥusayn ﷺ] said, "So I asked [ʿAlī ﷺ] about his behavior with others. He replied,

> God's Messenger ﷺ was always cheerful, easygoing in temperament, meek, and gentle with all. He was not mean or rude, and he was not hard-hearted. He did not raise his voice or shout [in disputes or arguments], nor was he crude or obscene. He did not criticize [anyone

or anything], nor was he excessive in praise for anyone. He pretended to not notice what he did not like [unless it was offensive to God]. No one lost hope in him.[12]

He gave himself no share in three [traits]: ostentation, excess, and what did not concern or benefit him. And he completely shunned the mention of people in three ways: he never disparaged anyone, never mentioned a shameful trait or fault of anyone's past, and never sought to expose anyone's private matters [or even think badly of another]. He did not speak, except regarding that in which he hoped for a divine reward. When he spoke, the attendees lowered their heads in stillness, as if birds were perched upon them; only when he fell silent, did they speak to one another [out of respect and veneration to him]. In his presence, they did not vie with one another to speak: if one of them spoke, the rest remained silent until [the companion or visitor] finished. The speech of the last of them was like that of the first of them [in enthusiasm toward the Prophet ﷺ and lack of boredom]. He laughed at what they laughed at, and he marveled at what they marveled at.[13] He patiently bore the rude expressions [or crude behavior] of a stranger. He said, 'If you see a person in need seeking to fulfill it, then help him.' He did not seek [or accept] praise, except if moderate. He never interrupted someone speaking until the person was done, such that the person would interrupt it by ending or by getting up to leave. [This is the end of the narration of Sufyān b. Wakīʿ. Another narrator had the following addition.]

"I [al-Ḥusayn ﷺ] said, 'What was his silence like?' [ʿAlī ﷺ] replied:

His silence was based on four [traits]: forbearance, caution [of harmful consequences], deliberation, and contemplation. His deliberation was in being fair[14] in listening to people and considering consequences. His contemplation was in the everlasting and the ephemeral [that is, everlasting good deeds versus vain pursuits of this world]. He was given forbearance in his patience, so nothing made him angry [for his own sake] or unsettled him. In his caution, he was granted four [traits]: partaking of the good, to set an example; abandoning

evil, so others too would leave it; exerting complete effort in thinking of solutions for his community; and undertaking, for their sake, everything that ensured their worldly and otherworldly triumph.

The Hadith of Umm Maᶜbad ﷺ

Ḥubaysh b. Khālid ﷺ (d. 8/629), a companion of God's Messenger ﷺ, relates[15] that when God's Messenger ﷺ—along with Abū Bakr ﷺ, Abū Bakr's client ᶜĀmir b. Fuhayrah ﷺ (d. 4/625), and their desert guide ᶜAbd Allāh b. Urayqiṭ al-Laythī—left Mecca and emigrated to Medina, they passed by the two tents of Umm Maᶜbad al-Khuzāᶜiyyah ﷺ, who was a strong elderly woman. She would sit outside the tent and give water and food [to visitors]. Hence, they asked her for meat and dates to purchase, but they did not acquire anything of that from her, for the people of that area were indigent and in a famine. Then God's Messenger ﷺ saw a sheep at the side of the tent and said, "What is this sheep, Umm Maᶜbad?"

She replied, "It is a sheep whose strength has left her behind [that is, it is emaciated]."

He asked, "Does she have any milk?"

She replied, "She is too emaciated for that."

He asked, "Do you give me permission to milk her?"

She said, "By my father and mother! If you see that she has any milk, please milk her."

So, God's Messenger ﷺ called for the sheep and wiped her udder with his hand, invoked the name of God, the exalted, and supplicated for the sheep of Umm Maᶜbad. Immediately, the sheep spread her legs wide and swelled with milk, so he called for a container that would suffice for the entire group, and milked into it a copious, flowing amount, until its splendor reached the top. Then he gave milk to Umm Maᶜbad until her thirst was quenched, then to his companions until theirs was quenched, and the Prophet ﷺ drank last, until all thirsts were fully quenched. Then he milked the sheep a second time; so much milk came forth that it gushed with a loud sound, until it filled the vessel. Then he left it with

her and took her pledge of faith, and they all left [to resume the journey].

Only a short time passed before her husband, Abū Maᶜbad, returned, driving some emaciated goats that swayed to the right and left, due to weakness, for their very marrows were slight. Hence, when Abū Maᶜbad saw the milk, he was amazed, and he said, "Where, O Umm Maᶜbad, did you get this from, for the sheep are barren and without pasture, and there is no milk in the house?"

She replied, "No, by God, except that a truly blessed man passed through. He was like such-and-such and such-and-such."

He said, "Describe him to me, Umm Maᶜbad."

She said:

> I saw a man of manifest beauty and splendor, with a radiant face and gracious character. He was not flawed with a large belly or blemished with a small head or thin frame. He was good-looking, altogether beautiful, with stunningly dark eyes [meaning the iris, surrounded by intensely white sclera] and long, flowing eyelashes. He had a strong voice, and his neck was long. His beard was not thin or too long, but full and thick. His eyebrows were long and arched, and joined in the middle.[16] When he was silent, his demeanor was one of forbearance and dignity, and when he spoke, splendor ascended in him. From afar, he was the most beautiful and splendid of people, and when he was near, he was the most stunning. His speech was ever sweet: it was clear and succinct, neither too little nor excessive, and not vile, flawed, or false. It was as if his words were strung beads of a necklace that flowed out.
>
> He was of medium stature; no eye would find him distasteful because of disproportionate height or belittle him for being short. [He was so pleasant to look at; he was] like a [tree] branch between two branches [Abū Bakr ؓ and ᶜĀmir b. Fuhayrah ؓ]: he was the most radiant of the three in looks and the most sublime of them in rank. He had companions who surrounded him; when he spoke, they listened attentively, and when he commanded something, they raced to

fulfill it. He was obeyed and venerated [by them], and around him were they gathered and ever alert to serve; he was never despised and never deemed senile or unintelligent.

ENDNOTES

1 Related by al-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, al-Haythamī in *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid wa manbaʿ al-fawāʾid*, and al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ in *Al-Shifā bi taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*. The wording of this translation is based on the latter narration and its commentary by Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī in his *Sharḥ al-shifā*.

2 That is, eminent in the eyes of people and magnificent in their hearts, or eminent in the sight of God and venerable in the eyes of creation. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:336.

3 Indicating his great status and dignity. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:336.

4 That is, upon seeing disobedience to the divine; hence, this description does not contradict the Prophet's statement "Do not get angry" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī), which refers to doing so over worldly matters, for the sake of one's ego. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:336.

5 In Arab custom, a moderately wide mouth was deemed handsome, and a narrow mouth was disliked, although the description could also be a metaphor referring to the great eloquence of the Prophet ﷺ. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:337.

6 This practice, along with the previous one of naturally looking downward, was out of his immense humility with his Lord. In addition, he would sometimes say to his companions while on a journey, "Leave what is behind me for the angels." Staying back also enabled him to be with the weaker companions, who were slower, and also to tend to the needs of the whole group in general. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:340.

7 That is, due to the width of his blessed mouth, a feature the Arabs deemed praiseworthy and handsome. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:341.

8 Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī comments, "That is, due to the purity of his vast heart from desire for other than his Lord, such that he not incline toward taking pleasure in the enjoyment of this worldly life—or direct himself toward any selfish interest—and be incited thereby to praise food or complain about it. One of the early masters was asked, 'Why is it that the sermons of the early Muslims were effective, while those of the later Muslims do not

benefit?' He replied, 'The early Muslim scholars were [spiritually] alive, and their audience was but asleep, while the later Muslim scholars are asleep, and their audience [spiritually] dead'" (*Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:342).

However, the Prophet ﷺ also said, "Whoever does not thank other people [for their favors] has not thanked God" (Sunan al-Tirmidhī), in light of which, thanking others for the food they prepare for one would be a reflection of gratitude towards the divine and hence fully prophetic. Indeed, as the text above just mentioned, "He venerated blessings, even if seemingly trivial." See al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, 6:297.

9 Indicating both that the marvelous event is the act of God alone and that the event shall soon be "turned over" into extinction, as is true of all things temporal and contingent. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:342.

10 Such gesturing by hand being customary in that time for one who speaks of an important matter, as a means of emphasis, by way of combining physical gesture with verbal speech, as if the speaker's entire being were directed to the affair at hand. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:342.

11 That is, out of humility before his Lord and as a manifestation of his distance from prideful exuberance or greed for the cause of joy. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:342.

12 Or this could mean "He never made anyone despair of him"—that is, of his generosity and sublime nature.

13 That is, so as to fulfill the right of keeping good company and to bring joy to their hearts. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:350.

14 As is the etiquette of a judge, to ensure fairness between people in a dispute and to equally lend an ear to all parties. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:350.

15 This hadith is related by al-Ṭabarānī in *Al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* and al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak*. The latter deemed it rigorously authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*), and al-Dhahabī concurred with that assessment in *Al-Talkhīṣ*. See al-Nīsāpūrī, *Al-Mustadrak ʿalā al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, 3:9.

16 The earlier narration of Hind b. Abī Hālah ﷺ mentions that his blessed eyebrows were not joined in the middle; Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī suggests that the discrepancy between the two narrations is possibly due to the respective distances of the onlookers from the Prophet ﷺ, for Hind ﷺ was relatively close, and Umm Maʿbad ﷺ was farther away. See al-Qārī, *Sharḥ al-shifā*, 1:337.

Transliteration Key

THE TRANSLITERATION CONVENTION throughout this book represents the Arabic script as follows:

Consonants:

ء	ʾ	د	*d*	ض	*ḍ*	ك	*k*
ب	*b*	ذ	*dh*	ط	*ṭ*	ل	*l*
ت	*t*	ر	*r*	ظ	*ẓ*	م	*m*
ث	*th*	ز	*z*	ع	ʿ	ن	*n*
ج	*j*	س	*s*	غ	*gh*	ه	*h*
ح	*ḥ*	ش	*sh*	ف	*f*	و	*w*
خ	*kh*	ص	*ṣ*	ق	*q*	ي	*y*

Vowels:

Short vowels:	ـَ	*a*	ـُ	*u*	ـِ	*i*
Long vowels:	ـَا	*ā*	ـُو	*ū*	ـِي	*ī*
Dipthongs:	ـَو	*aw*	ـَي	*ay*		

The definite article is rendered *al-* to preserve the representation of the Arabic script as written, not as pronounced, except where fully inflected expressions are quoted as such. Therefore, *ash-shams* is rendered *al-shams*, unless it appears in a fully inflected verbal expression, such as *wa sh-shamsi wa ḍuḥāhā*. Without inflection, this written expression is rendered *wa al-shams wa ḍuḥāhā*.

The *tā' marbūṭah* is represented by a final *h*, unless it ends the first term of an *iḍāfah* construction, as in *laylat al-qadr*. Note that the *tā' marbūṭah* in *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāʿah*, for instance, is represented as an *h* because it is not the first term of an *iḍāfah* construction.

Words that have entered the English language, such as "hadith," "fatwa," and "imam," are not transliterated or italicized unless rendered in formulaic Arabic expressions or idiomatic phrases.

ﷺ An invocation of God's blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muḥammad: "May God's blessings and peace be upon him."

عليه السلام An invocation of God's peace upon a prophet or angel: "May peace be upon him."

عليهما السلام An invocation of God's peace upon two prophets: "May peace be upon them."

عليهم السلام An invocation of God's peace upon three or more prophets: "May peace be upon them."

رضي الله عنه An invocation of God's contentment with a male companion of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with him."

رضي الله عنها An invocation of God's contentment with a female companion of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with her."

رضي الله عنهما An invocation of God's contentment with two companions of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with them."

رضي الله عنهم An invocation of God's contentment with three or more companions of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with them."

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ABOUT THE ZAYTUNA CURRICULUM SERIES

AT ZAYTUNA COLLEGE, we firmly hold the conviction that the estrangement of faith from reason that emerged out of modernity belies the deep commitment premodern faiths had toward reason. For centuries, reason and revelation represented complementary aspects of both the Western (Christian) and Islamic intellectual traditions. We are aware that the Hellenistic tradition greatly influenced Muslim intellectual endeavors, but too often we neglect the immense influence of the Muslim tradition on Western thought; far from being divergent, these two intellectual streams flow from the same river of knowledge.

Unfortunately, in the more recent past, many Muslim traditionalists have relegated reason to a lesser place, with a radical minority even expunging it entirely from their understanding of the religion. Beyond their embrace of reason, Muslims—always syncretists, based on the prophetic tradition that wisdom is the lost property of the believer—willingly studied, and borrowed from, the intellectual legacies of other civilizations. They digested, translated, and integrated many great works of the Indian, Persian, and Hellenistic cultures into their own tradition.

Inspired by these legacies, the Zaytuna Curriculum Series seeks to help restore reason to its proper place of honor, to reconcile it with revelation in Islamic learning, and also to cultivate a welcoming and curious intellectual climate by publishing texts, commentaries, and new works from the Islamic tradition, as well as from other traditions, that reflect the full richness of our heritage. This publishing project is a natural outgrowth of Zaytuna College, where our core mission is to educate students in both the Islamic and Western liberal arts traditions, making our curriculum represent the best of both traditions by incorporating them into an integral program of study.

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